



If calling, please ask for Democratic Services

Environment Committee

Tuesday 27 February 2024, 09.30am

Taumata Kōrero, Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council,
100 Cuba St, Te Aro, Wellington

Quorum: Seven Members

Members

Councillors

Penny Gaylor (Chair)

David Bassett

Chris Kirk-Burnnand

David Lee

Daran Ponter

Yadana Saw

Simon Woolf

Quentin Duthie (Deputy Chair)

Ros Connelly

Ken Laban

Thomas Nash

Hikitia Ropata

Adrienne Staples

Appointee

Barbie Barton

Recommendations in reports are not to be construed as Council policy until adopted by Council

Environment Committee (A Committee of the Whole)

1 Purpose

Oversee the development, implementation and review of Council's:

- a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators to improve environmental outcomes for the Wellington Region's land, water, air, biodiversity, natural resources, parks and reserves, and coastal marine area
- b Regional resilience priorities in the delivery of plans, programmes, initiatives and activities for flood protection, erosion control, and regional parks and forests
- c Regulatory systems, processes and tools to meet Council's related legislative responsibilities
- d Plans, programmes, and efforts to increase volunteer uptake, community involvement and mahi tahi with others seeking to improve environmental outcomes in the Wellington Region.

2 Specific responsibilities

The Committee's environmental responsibilities include the areas of land use management, air quality, water health and quality, regional natural resources, river control, flood protection, regional parks and reserves, coastal marine environment, maritime navigation and safety, biosecurity and biodiversity.

- 2.1 Apply Council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles when conducting the Committee's business and making decisions.
- 2.2 Oversee the development and review of Council's:
 - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
 - b Regional resilience prioritiesand recommend these matters (and variations) to Council for adoption.
- 2.3 Review periodically the effectiveness of implementing and delivering Council's:
 - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
 - b Regional resilience priorities.
- 2.4 Consider regional, national and international developments; emerging issues and impacts; and changes in the legislative frameworks for their implications for Council's:
 - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
 - b Regulatory systems, processes and tools.

- 2.5 Recommend to Council changes to improve the effectiveness of Council's:
 - a Environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators
 - b Regional resilience priorities
 - c Regulatory systems, processes and tools.
- 2.6 Review Greater Wellington's compliance with Council's related legislative responsibilities¹, and the monitoring and enforcement of compliance.
- 2.7 Ensure that the Committee's decision making:
 - a Considers climate change-related risks (mitigation and adaptation)
 - b Is consistent with Council's plans and initiatives to give effect to Council's declaration of a climate emergency on 21 August 2019, including agreed emissions reduction targets.
- 2.8 Review, after each Farming Reference Group meeting, a written report of the business conducted at that meeting.

3 Delegations

- 3.1 Subject to sections 3.3 to 3.7, Council delegates to the Committee all the powers, functions and duties necessary to perform the Committee's responsibilities (except those that must not be delegated, have been retained by Council, have been delegated to another committee, or have been delegated to the Chief Executive).
- 3.2 The Committee has the authority to approve submissions to external organisations for matters pertaining directly to the Committee's purpose.
- 3.3 The Committee may make decisions on matters with a financial impact only where the related costs are:
 - a Budgeted for in the relevant business group's budget
 - b Not budgeted for in the relevant business group's budget, but can be met from savings within that budget.
- 3.4 Where the Committee considers a decision with a material financial impact is needed², the Committee must refer the matter to Council for its decision.
- 3.5 The Committee may not make a decision that is materially inconsistent with Council's Annual Plan or Long Term Plan.
- 3.6 Where a matter proposed for consideration by the Committee (including during the development of proposed Greater Wellington plans and policies) is of strategic

¹ These responsibilities include those under the Resource Management Act 1991 and for the granting of resource consents, the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1967, the Biosecurity Act 1993, the Reserves Act 1977, and the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

² That is, where savings are identified from other business groups' budgets to meet the related costs; or no savings are identified across Greater Wellington's overall budget to meet the related costs.

importance to the Wairarapa Constituency, that matter shall first be referred to the Wairarapa Committee or its members for their consideration.

- 3.7 The Committee shall ensure that it acts under the guidance of the Memorandum of Partnership in working with Greater Wellington's mana whenua partners of the Wellington Region to ensure effective Māori participation in the Committee's deliberations and decision-making processes.

4 Members

- 4.1 All thirteen Councillors.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Farming Reference Group.

5 Voting entitlement

The Chair of the Farming Reference Group sits at the table and has full speaking rights, but has no voting rights at any Committee meeting.

6 Quorum

Seven Committee members.

7 Meeting frequency

The Committee shall meet six times each year, with additional meetings as required.

Environment Committee

Tuesday 27 February 2024, 9:30am

Taumata Kōrero, Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council
100 Cuba St, Te Aro, Wellington

Public Business

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Please note these minutes remain unconfirmed until the Environment Committee meeting on 27 February 2024.

Report 23.587

Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on Thursday 23 November 2023

Taumata Kōrero – Council Chamber, Greater Wellington Regional Council
100 Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington at 9.31am.

Members Present

Councillor Gaylor (Chair)
Councillor Duthie (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Bassett
Councillor Connelly (until 12.30pm)
Councillor Kirk-Burnnand
Councillor Lee
Councillor Nash
Councillor Ropata
Councillor Saw
Councillor Staples (from 11.00am)
Councillor Woolf

Barbie Barton

Councillor Duthie and Barbie Barton participated at this meeting remotely, via MS Teams, and counted for the purpose of quorum in accordance with clause 25B of Schedule 7 to the Local Government Act 2002.

Karakia timatanga

The Committee Chair opened the meeting with a karakia timatanga.

Public Business

1 Apologies

Moved: Cr Saw / Cr Nash

That the Committee accepts the apology for absence from Councillors Laban and Ponter, the apology for lateness from Councillor Staples and the apology for early departure from Councillor Connelly.

The motion was **carried**.

2 Declarations of conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

3 Public participation

Emily Mossmon spoke on Pest control in the Lower and Upper Korokoro Valley and spoke to a presentation.

4 Confirmation of the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 12 October 2023 – Report 23.535

Moved: Cr Bassett / Cr Nash

That the Committee confirms the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 12 October 2023 – Report 23.535.

The motion was **carried**.

5 Annual Asset Management Condition Report – Report 23.546

Lucy Ashford, Team Leader Flood Operations Planning, Jack Mace, Director, Delivery and Graeme Campbell, Principal Advisor Flood and Resilience, spoke to the report.

Moved: Cr Gaylor / Cr Kirk-Burnnand

That the Committee:

- 1 Agrees that the flood protection and erosion control infrastructure assets on the 15 schemes across the Wellington Region have been managed satisfactorily to the agreed Level of Service (LoS) in the 2022/23 financial year.
- 2 Notes that there has been a decline in the condition of the less critical flood management assets, and this will likely continue without further investment.
- 3 Notes that identified issues are being addressed through maintenance and improvement work programmes.
- 4 Notes that current budgets are insufficient to ensure that assets are maintained to agreed levels of service in the long term.
- 5 Notes that options have been presented to the Long-Term Plan Committee to address issues that have been identified and invites the Finance, Risk and Assurance Committee to consider this matter.

The motion was **carried**.

Noted: Councillor Duthie requested that his vote against the motion be recorded.

The Chair accorded priority to agenda item 7 – Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office – Lessons Learnt from Cyclone Gabrielle and Regional Exercises – Report 23.616 in accordance with standing order 3.5.2.

7 Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office – Lessons Learnt from Cyclone Gabrielle and Regional Exercises – Report 23.616 [For Information]

Andy Brown, Team Leader Knowledge – Water, Charlie Blanch, Manager Operational Readiness and Response, WREMO, Jeremy Holmes, Regional Manager, WREMO and Dan Neely Manager Community Resilience, WREMO spoke to the report. Flood protection contributions across regions, was tabled.

Councillor Staples arrived at 11.00am during the above item.

Councillor Woolf, Councillor Lee and Councillor Ropata departed the meeting at 11.04am.

The meeting adjourned at 11.04am and resumed at 11.24am.

6 Farming Reference Group Update Report – Report 23.698 [For Information]

Barbie Barton, Chair of the Farming Reference Group spoke to the report.

8 Whaitua Implementation Update – Report 23.569 [For Information]

Lian Butcher, Group Manager Environment and Nicola Patrick, Director Catchment, spoke to the report.

During the above item Councillor Woolf returned to the meeting at 11.26am; Councillor Lee returned to the meeting 11.28am; and Councillor Ropata returned to the meeting at 11.30am.

9 Whaitua Development Update – Report 23.570 [For Information]

Nicola Patrick, Director, Catchment spoke to the report.

10 Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement – National Metrics – Report 23.609 [For Information]

Shaun Andrewartha, Manager Environmental Regulation, spoke to the report.

11 Greater Wellington’s Management of Forestry Slash – Report 23.592 [For Information]

Will Syben, Team Leader Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement, Shaun Andrewartha, Manager Environmental Regulation, David Boone, Manager Ecosystems and Community and Scott Ihaka, Project Manager – Daleton Nursery, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested a report to a future Environment Committee meeting regarding what Greater Wellington does as good practice above the compliance levels for forestry.

12 Regulation of Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Wellington Region – Report 23.594 [For Information]

Fathima Iftikar, Director Strategy, Policy and Regulation, Jo Frances, Team Leader Consents and Compliance, Josh Knowles, Senior Resource Advisor, Michelle Conland, Consultant Resource Advisor, and Shaun Andrewartha, Manager Environmental Regulation, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested a report to a future meeting regarding the history and future of urban development as it relates to wastewater.

13 Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan for 2023-2024 – Report 23.574 [For Information]

Myfanwy Hill, Manager Environment Operations, and Katrina Merrifield, Advisor Environment Policy, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested the Department of Conservation document that was presented to the Farming Reference Group be circulated to the Committee.

14 Annual Floodplain Management Plan Implementation Report – Report 23.548 [For Information]

Madeliene Playford, Team Leader FMP Implementation, and Sharyn Westlake, Principal Engineer Construction RiverLink spoke to the report.

Councillor Connelly departed at 12.30pm during the above item and did not return.

15 Fresh Water Farm Plans – Report 23.531 [For Information]

Richard Romijn, Team Leader Environment Restoration, Will Syben, Team Leader Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement, and Petra Fransen, Team Leader Environment Restoration, spoke to the report.

16 Successful Outcomes of the Climate Resilience Programme – Report 23.543 [For Information]

Sharyn Westlake, Principal Engineer Construction RiverLink, spoke to the report.

17 Te Rōpū Taiao – Environment Group Update – Report 23.8 [For Information]

Lian Butcher, Group Manager, Environment, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested:

- A report to a future meeting regarding consents that have been met in relation to Transmission Gully.
- A schedule of the meetings and webinars about the Implementation of Plan Change 1 to be circulated to members.

Karakia whakamutunga

The Committee Chair closed the meeting with a karakia whakamutunga.

The public meeting closed at 1.06pm.

Councillor P Gaylor

Chair

Date:

Environment Committee
27 February 2024
Report 24.69



For Information

RESPONSE TO RECENT GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee (the Committee) on Government changes in relation to environmental legislation, with a particular focus on:
 - a the new fast-track consenting legislation.
 - b changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM).
 - c signalling on freshwater farm plans.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The changes announced as part of the repeal of the Three Waters legislation and the introduction of the Local Water Done Well legislation have not been analysed. The changes signalled in this repeal will be presented at a future Council meeting as part of the post 100-day plan analysis of the Coalition Government.

Greater Wellington is currently assessing the Government's direction on changes to environmental legislation

3. Officers presented to Council on 7 December 2023 with a paper outlining the Government's policy direction and impact across the Greater Wellington business (*Government's Policy Direction – Understanding what it means for Greater Wellington – Report 23.642*). This included signalled changes to the NPS-FM and introduction of fast-track consenting legislation.
4. In December 2023, the Coalition Government announced the following:
 - a extension of the NPS-FM deadline to 31 December 2027.
 - b replacing of the existing NPS-FM within 18 to 20 months.
 - c indicated 'rebalancing' Te Mana o Te Wai (TMoTW) to better reflect the interests of all water users.
 - d remove the application of the TMoTW hierarchy of obligations in consenting through the planned Resource Management Act amendment bill.
5. The Government has already repealed the Natural and Built Environment (NBEA) and Spatial Planning (SPA) Acts.

6. Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for Resource Management (RM) reform, wrote to Local Government Chief Executives on 31 January 2024 outlining the Government's plans for the NPS-FM and fast-track consenting ([Attachment 1](#)). Officers have subsequently been briefed by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) officials, and sector working groups have been established and met.
7. Furthermore, on 13 February 2024, MfE informed Regional Council Chief Executives that the Coalition Government has signalled their intention to improve freshwater farm plans to ensure they are cost effective and pragmatic for farmers. In the meantime, Government has advised we continue with work as per the current system, taking a "light touch and pragmatic" approach to implementation until they make a further announcement. We expect to have more information by April 2024.
8. The Government announcements, while clearly indicating replacing the existing NPS-FM 2020, do not carry statutory weight, and the current regulatory framework still applies. Since it was first introduced in 2011, the NPS-FM has gone through several amendments and replacements.
9. The Government is not formally directing councils to stop plan changes. However, given recent context, we are aware that Ministers are expecting that plan changes will be slowed down due to the signalled changes on the extension of the existing timeframes and the replacement of the existing NPS-FM.

Our current work programme set by existing legislation is underway

10. The NPS-FM requires regional councils to set limits as rules and develop action plans (non-regulatory measures) to achieve certain water quality target attribute states. The whitua process remains Greater Wellington's way of engaging with communities and mana whenua as a response to implementing the NPS-FM.
11. Greater Wellington is currently engaged with mana whenua and community in the Kāpiti catchment to produce a Whitua Implementation Programme (WIP). The Wairarapa Coast is the remaining whitua to yet undergo WIP development.
12. There are two major plan changes under way, Plan Change 1 to Natural Resources Plan for Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Regional Policy Statement Change 1 (RPS Change 1).
13. In November 2023, Officers informed Council at a workshop that the statutory December 2024 NPS-FM timeline will be met in part. Officers provided realistic considerations on how we can meet our obligations. Officers were to report back on the more detailed timeline of the remaining NPS-FM related plan changes, on progressing the remaining Whitua processes, and required resourcing.
14. Greater Wellington was not impacted by the repeal of NBA and SPA as we were not a Tranche 1 regional council. We continue our functions under the existing Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). While a small number of 'freshwater' consents were approved under the repealed legislation this did not unduly affect our standard approach to such consents and therefore a review of the consents in question is not necessary.

Te tātaritanga

Analysis

Fast-track consenting legislation

Development and introduction of the legislation is at-speed

15. A fast-track consenting bill will be introduced to Parliament by 7 March 2024 as part of the Government’s 100-day action plan. The bill will be referred to a select committee for a 3-4 month period and likely enacted by the end of 2024.
16. The bill will be a stand-alone piece of legislation – not an amendment to the RMA – and will be a ‘one-stop-shop’ covering approvals under other legislation such as conservation, heritage, freshwater, fisheries regulations, and notices of requirement. The Building Act 2004 is not being discussed for inclusion at present, although other Acts or approval processes could be included by amendment over time.
17. Prior to the introduction of the bill, MfE officials are undertaking limited engagement with Councils and Iwi-Māori through Treaty of Waitangi Post Settlement Governance Entities (PSGEs). Greater Wellington is represented on a focus group established by Taituarā, pushing for improvements on the existing fast-track processes. The short timeframe associated with the Bill leaves little opportunity to have meaningful impact on the drafting and therefore our future input will be through submissions on the Bill.

Proposed elements of the fast-track legislation

18. The new fast-track consenting process will be modelled on the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020, and the process included in the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023. The legislation will establish the process for referring and considering proposals; include a list of projects that are pre-approved for consideration under the fast-track process; and may also include projects that are approved by the legislation without being referred to a panel.
19. Projects that are approved for the fast-track process will be referred to an expert panel which will have a “high threshold” to decline a proposal. The relevant local authorities will be invited to nominate panel members – as is the case for existing fast-track processes. The panel will not be required to hold a hearing, but will consult with relevant Ministers, adjacent landowners, local authorities and PSGEs.
20. A broader scope will allow fast-tracking of projects of national, regional, and *local significance* (yet to be defined). Examples of such projects are said to include but not be limited to infrastructure, housing developments, aquaculture, flood control schemes, energy generation, and mineral extraction. Proposals that have been declined from existing fast-track processes may be considered for referral under the new legislation.

Role of the Regional Council in Fast-track consenting is limited

21. There are a number of opportunities for regional councils to get involved in the existing and proposed fast-track consenting process:
 - a through provision of pre-application advice to the applicant.
 - b by invitation to provide comments on proposals being considered for referral.

- c by invitation to nominate panel members.
 - d the expert panel may seek comments on a proposal.
 - e the expert panel may commission a report from council related to specific aspects of a proposal.
 - f if the panel grants regional consents related to the project, the regional council becomes the compliance, monitoring and enforcement (CME) agency.
22. Experience to date with existing fast-track processes shows that they can be time consuming. The inability to cost recover for time spent commenting on proposals constrains our ability to assist the panel with comprehensive and detailed comments, including gaining input from specialists we would ordinarily rely on in RMA consenting. Only the provision of a requested report to the panel, and CME activity can be cost-recovered from the applicant, and therefore our involvement in other aspects of the process is covered by ratepayers. This may be justified in some regionally significant proposals but is concerning where the project has limited community or public-good elements.
23. Where regional council comments have been sought on proposals, our approach to-date has been 'a whole of Council' response (rather than just a regulatory one). This can be difficult to coordinate in tight timeframes. We are hoping for more clarification in the forthcoming legislation as to what the expert panel would like to see in terms of information and input from Local Government.
24. The most significant issue from a Regulatory perspective is the rushed nature of the process - which leads to projects being granted with much of the detail yet to be sorted out in management plans, and poorly drafted or unimplementable conditions. This creates a lot of work for our Regulatory teams in seeking to interpret and implement workable conditions, processing variations to the consents, reviewing management plans, following up on reporting requirements, non-compliance, and enforcement.

Next steps

25. There is limited opportunity for Greater Wellington to influence the purpose and principles or development of the Bill, and we may not see the proposals to be listed in the legislation until it is introduced.
26. Greater Wellington officers are part of a sector working group engaging with MfE officials on the mechanics of fast-track consenting drawing on past experience. Multiple councils have raised concerns about limiting consultation to PSGEs, upholding treaty settlement obligations, and the inability to cost-recover council time spent providing comments.
27. Te Uru Kahika and other sector groups are planning to make submissions on the bill when it is introduced, and Greater Wellington officers will contribute to these submissions.

Changes to the NPS-FM

Greater Wellington is looking at all opportunities to engage with the NPS-FM replacement

28. The Coalition Government extended the deadline for meeting the NPS-FM to 31 December 2027. The Government also announced replacing the NPS-FM indicating that

the replacement will take between 18 to 20 months. The extension of the deadline is helpful, however, the visibility of what will actually change and the direction of the new NPS-FM is highly uncertain.

29. Officers prepared a high-level assessment of the implications of those announcements on our freshwater related work programme (see [Attachment 2](#)). Currently, we are working across the Policy, Knowledge and Insights, and Catchment functions to provide you with further advice on the timing and sequencing of the remaining plan changes.
30. It should be noted that changes to national direction happen often. The NPS-FM has gone through several amendments and replacements since its introduction in 2011. Greater Wellington has had to previously adapt work programmes to changing national direction. This is not new for us. What is concerning is the potential speed of change with limited opportunity to engage.
31. There is little information on how the Government will conduct the process to replace the current NPS-FM. Based on the indicated timeline, there will be very little time for meaningful consultation. Our expectation is that any plan changes after 2027 will be subject to the new NPS-FM.
32. The regional sector is engaging through Te Uru Kahika with MfE, and the sector is considering the available pathways to leverage its collective influence.

Regional Policy Statement Change 1 and NRP Plan Change 1 are proceeding under the existing RMA

33. The Regional Policy Statement framework sets the direction for the upcoming plan changes including the Plan Change 1. Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement (RPS Change 1) is nearing the end of hearings. There is one hearings stream left, 'Small topics, wrap-up and integration'. Council needs to make a decision on the hearings panel recommendations in August 2024. The RPS Change 1 hearings panel recommendations and Council decision on their recommendations will be delivered under the current NPS-FM 2020. The timing of any appeals for the RPS Change 1 is yet to be set.
34. Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan (PC1) was notified on 30 October 2023, and submissions closed on 15 December 2023. PC1 covers Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Te Whanganui-a-Tara catchments, and it embeds the WIPs for those two catchments. PC1 also includes Te Mahere Wai and Ngāti Toa Rangatira Statement, as Greater Wellington's approach to implementing the NPS-FM. A further submission period is from 12 February to 8 March 2024.
35. PC1 was notified before the Government made the NPS-FM announcements about the deadline extension and replacement. Notification started the regulatory 'clock', in particular for the Freshwater Planning Process (Council has to make a decision on the freshwater hearings panel recommendations by October 2025).
36. It is unlikely that the NPS-FM replacement will be gazetted in time to direct the hearings stage of the PC1 process. However, the new NPS-FM is likely to play out through the appeals and any Environment / High Court proceedings.
37. Both plan changes are proceeding under the existing RMA framework. Pausing the plan changes and waiting for the new NPS-FM, comes at a significant cost to both the

environment and rate payers while prolonging uncertainty for communities, mana whenua and businesses.

38. The Government announcements have varied implications for the remaining whitua processes and plan changes. Officers are assessing those implications and will provide more detail in our future advice.

We are assessing our approach to the remaining plan changes

39. Greater Wellington is currently engaged with mana whenua and community in the Kāpiti catchment. The Kāpiti WIP is expected to be delivered in April-May 2024. The Government announcements have no implications for completing the WIP. However, the uncertainty of how the new NPS-FM will look like and timing of it, is likely to have implications for the next phase - the Kāpiti plan change.
40. The Wairarapa Coast is the remaining whitua to yet undergo WIP development. Starting with a catchment planning approach followed by the National Objectives Framework will hopefully provide more insight on the direction of the new NPS-FM, especially whether there will be changes to the suite of compulsory attributes.
41. The delay to the Ruamāhanga plan change creates environmental and consenting risks relating to further allocation of freshwater. Whilst the extension of the NPS-FM deadline to December 2027 provides some relief, there is an issue with water permits coming up for renewal in over-allocated catchments in 2025. Officers are considering a 'mini plan change for allocation' in 2024 to alleviate those immediate risks. We are currently assessing the scope that would be realistic and workable to be notified by the end of 2024. It is useful to note that this will not be a full Ruamāhanga water allocation review because of the limited time to meaningfully engage with the wider community and mana whenua.
42. Officers are considering the Government announcements, uncertainty of the timing and direction of the changes to the NPS-FM, and 2025 local body election in our advice on sequencing and timing of the remaining freshwater related plan changes that Council will receive in April. We are also looking at the efficiencies in the process to meet the new NPS-FM timeline. The timing for the full Ruamāhanga plan change is being considered within the wider Wairarapa context.

Freshwater farm-plans

43. Implementation of the freshwater farm plan roll out by regional and unitary councils has been going well. Many parts of the system are being progressed at the same time in a pragmatic and joined up way in the Wellington region. Staff are now working through what a 'light touch' will look like for implementation in our region and will be scaling back their outreach until more is known.
44. Even though we don't have all the answers yet, we expect a New Zealand farm environment planning system will continue in a form that aims to better meet the needs of farmers and growers. We will continue to keep a close eye on any updates from central Government, advocate for the needs of our region, work through what any changes mean for us locally, and keep you informed.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori

Implications for Māori

45. The new policy direction will have major impacts on Greater Wellington's mana whenua partners and Māori in general.
46. The government has stated it will honour the undertakings made by the Crown through past Treaty of Waitangi settlements and will consult with PSGEs on legislative changes, and projects using the fast-track consenting process.
47. The Government's approach of working with PSGEs is not likely to be problematic for Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Taranaki Whānui as their PSGEs are the same entities we partner with. However, the entities we partner with in the Wairarapa are not PSGEs. And it is unclear what this will mean for Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngā Hapū ō Ōtaki who are not yet settled with the Crown and have overlapping rohē with Muaūpoko which has a PSGE.
48. Mana whenua have partnered with Greater Wellington in each of the whitua processes. This partnership is critical to the success of how the NPS-FM is implemented across the region. The whitua process articulates mana whenua and community aspirations for freshwater outcomes and triggers both regulatory and non-regulatory responses.
49. As a region, we have invested significant time and resources in the whitua processes setting a platform for collective effort to improve the health of waterways by bringing together communities, mana whenua, territorial authorities and Greater Wellington. Greater Wellington is committed to implementing the WIPs and mana whenua statements as they are the expression of community and mana whenua aspirations for freshwater.
50. Changes to TMoTW hierarchy and the removal of consideration of TMoTW for consent decisions (including those under fast track) will result in poorer outcomes for freshwater which may not align with commitments in Treaty Settlements and structures that flow from these Settlements. Whilst the TMoTW hierarchy is being removed from the consenting considerations, the RPS Change 1 currently has three mana whenua expressions of what TMoTW means to respective mana whenua. Those expressions, even though currently still proposed, will need to be considered in the consenting process alongside operative RPS.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

51. [Attachment 3](#) – update on the NPS-FM and Government announcements will be presented at the Committee meeting.
52. Advice will be provided to Council as the specific details emerge for both the detailed legislative changes, the process around engagement and the impact on work programmes.
53. We will be looking for an opportunity to discuss the options we have for freshwater plan-change sequencing with Council in a workshop in March 2024.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachments

| Number | Title |
|---------------|--|
| 1 | Letter from Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RM reform, to Local Government Chief Executives |
| 2 | High-level assessment of the implications of announcements on freshwater plan change related work programmes |
| 3 | Update on the NPS-FM and Government announcements. |

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatories

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Writers | Jo Frances – Kaitohutohu Arahi Whakaaetanga Lead Consenting Advisor Natasha Tomic – Kaitaki-a-tīma Team Leader Policy Matt Hickman – Kaitohutohu Mātāmua Rautaki, Kaupapa Here me ngā Waeture Principal Advisor, Strategy Policy & Regulation Shaun Andrewartha – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Manager, Environmental Regulation |
| Approvers | Fathima Iftikar – Hautū Rautaki, Kaupapa Here me ngā Waeture Director Strategy, Policy and Regulation Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|---|
| <p><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></p> <p>The Committee has the specific responsibility to consider regional, national and international developments; emerging issues and impacts; and changes in the legislative frameworks for their implications for Council’s environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators.</p> |
| <p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>Changing priorities and funding arrangements for central Government will impact on Council’s Long Term Plan and other key planning documents.</p> |
| <p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>This paper has been prepared by a number of teams across Council including Strategy, Policy & Regulation, Catchment and Te Hunga Whiriwhiri.</p> |
| <p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>There may be legal risks to Council as policy and legislation changes. Further detail will be provided when known.</p> |

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance



31 January 2024

Tēnā koe

Development of fast-track consenting legislation and changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

I am writing to advise you of the Government's plans to develop fast-track consenting legislation and introduce changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 early this year.

This follows on from my 13 December 2023 letter confirming that the Government is committed to reforming the resource management system. This began with the repeal of the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 and the Spatial Planning Act 2023 and the retention of a temporary fast-track consenting regime.

The next phase is to introduce a permanent fast-track consenting process for locally, regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and developments. This was part of the Government's coalition agreement and will be delivered through a bill introduced in the Government's first 100 days in office, before 7 March 2024. We recognise how important these developments are for New Zealand's prosperity. That is why providing certainty and a faster consenting pathway for significant projects is a priority for us.

In the third phase of the reform, we will replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) with new resource management laws based on the enjoyment of property rights.

Proposed fast-track consenting bill

I am proposing a new bill which draws on the previous fast-track regimes and that will reflect the following:

- The new fast-track process will be contained in a standalone Act with its own purpose statement.
- Locally, regionally and nationally significant infrastructure and development projects will be prioritised.
- There will be a process for the responsible minister to refer projects for acceptance into the fast-track process, and the bill will also contain a list of projects that will be first to have their approvals granted.
- Referred projects will go to an Expert Panel, which will have limited ability to decline a project once referred and will apply any necessary conditions to ensure adverse effects of the project are managed.

The proposed Bill would contain specific protections for Treaty settlements and other Treaty-related arrangements and commitments. Projects would be assessed for their compliance with these arrangements before being referred to the Expert Panel.

The proposed Bill will set out a 'one-stop shop' process for approvals under a range of legislation, including the RMA.

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)

In my 13 December 2023 letter, I advised we will review and replace the NPS-FM in this parliamentary term. This will be done through the RMA process for developing and amending national direction. This will take time, so we have extended the statutory deadline for councils to notify freshwater planning instruments to implement the NPS-FM by three years.

In the interim we intend to progress changes to how the hierarchy of obligations contained in Te Mana o te Wai provisions of the NPS-FM apply to consent applications and consent decisions. Our intention is that these changes will be made through a separate RMA amendment bill this year.

Next steps

Details of the fast-track consenting regime and NPS-FM changes will be worked through over the coming weeks.

To inform this work, officials will carry out targeted engagement with groups representing Māori, local government, infrastructure, development, and environmental and commercial interests, as well as technical experts. This includes the Local Government Steering Group and local government peak bodies.

There will be an opportunity to provide feedback through a select committee process which is likely to commence in March, shortly after introduction of the fast-track consenting bill.

We will make more information available as work progresses. In the meantime, should you have any questions relating to the content of this letter, please contact RM.Reform@mfe.govt.co.nz.

Yours sincerely



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

Attachment 2 to Report 24.69: Update on the NPS-FM and fast track Consenting announcements.

High level assessment of the Government announcements on replacement of the NPS-FM 2020: Implications for freshwater work programme

| Freshwater related work programme | Deadline extension | Assessments/comments/implications of ‘what we know’ |
|---|---------------------|---|
| NRP Plan Change 1 (PC1) | No impact currently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying on under the current regulatory framework. • PC1 - expression of community and mana whenua expectations/aspirations – that will not change. • RPS framework sets direction for the upcoming plan changes including PC1. • Government is not directing us to stop the plan changes. • Still operating under the existing RMA framework. • Broadly, PC1 is about ‘maintain and improve’ – the replacement NPS-FM may have impact on the speed of reaching the objectives. • Timeline for the replacement of the current NPS-FM uncertain; difficult to assess the implications without knowing what will change. Potentially, might be more difficult to justify going beyond the bottom lines or ‘flow on’ impact of changes to the suite of compulsory attributes. • Hearings are expected to be completed under the existing NPS-FM; high uncertainty whether the Council decision on the hearings panel recommendations will be under current or replacement NPS-FM. Appeals likely to fall under the replacement NPS-FM. • Consenting under the notified PC 1 – little of no impact however the duration of the consent may have to be managed. |
| RPS Change 1 Mana Whenua TMoTW Statements | No impact currently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying on under the current regulatory framework. • Hearings panel has to deliver their recommendations by early July 2024 (clause 51, Schedule 1); Council has to make the final decision on the hearing panel’s recommendations by 19 August 2024. • Both decisions will be under the current NPS-FM. |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 mana whenua TMoTW statements (the statements are broader than NPS-FM TMoTW) are in the RPS Change 1 providing a framework (esp for the Ruamāhanga and Wairarapa Coast plan changes). • The visions relating to the PC1 (Variation 1) for Te Awarua o Porirua and Te Whanganui a Tara , as they currently stand, expresses the long term visions as aspirations for freshwater broadly. |
| Kāpiti whaitua process (phase 1) | Allows for more time, however, the replacement of the NPS-FM adds uncertainty for meeting the deadline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No implications for completing the Kāpiti whaitua process. • WiP is in the final stages and likely to be completed by the end of April 2024. |
| Kāpiti plan change (phase 2) | Allows for more time, however, the replacement of the NPS-FM adds uncertainty for meeting the deadline and what changes will be required to meet the new NPS-FM. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential implications for the Kāpiti plan change depending on timing of it; currently regional plans can be stricter than national direction. • The replacement NPS-FM may come into place before the plan is notified; this will extend the timeline. |
| Ruamāhanga plan change | Allows for more time, however, the replacement of the NPS-FM adds uncertainty for meeting the deadline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruamāhanga WIP was developed under the NPS-FM 2014 and 2016. • Any changes to the compulsory values/attributes will have impact, however, starting work in 2025 may give us time to better understand and reflect the new NPS-FM direction. • The RoW and KKW TMoTW statements are in the RPS Change 1 (the statements are wider than TMoTW, they are about mana whenua aspirations for freshwater) – this provides the framework for the Ruamāhanga and Wairarapa Coast plan change. • NRP has to <i>recognise and provide</i> for the Natural Resources Document (under the Wairarapa Moana statutory board), opportunity to do more than the intent of the WIP. Timing of the document is still unclear. Later timeline may allow for better alignment. |
| Ruamāhanga (mini) plan change - allocation only | Should be considered this year due to environmental risks from water takes | <p>Ruamāhanga Mini Plan Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phasing out overallocation while ensuring fairness to all current consent holders. • Justifiable based on adverse environmental effects but would have less support from higher order direction. |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category A groundwater cease takes, extending the existing deadline that is in the NRP. <p>Ruamāhanga Full Allocations Plan Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruamāhanga WIP implementation does not rely on the current NPS-FM so could be done under any NPS version. However, it may make it 'out of date' depending on the new national direction. • Decisions around Ruamāhanga water allocation plan change/s can - direction from the Ruamāhanga WIP, as well as any new knowledge and technical information currently available. • Consideration of Te Whanganui a Tara allocation plan change being done at the same time. |
| Wairarapa East Coast | Allows more time to apply the new NPS-FM replacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have much clearer idea of the requirements of the replacement NPS-FM that can be reflected in the WIP. • Starting with a catchment planning approach followed by the National Objectives Framework as there is more clarity about the replacement NPS-FM. |
| Consenting | No direct impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMA amendments will remove the hierarchy of obligations contained in the Te Mana o Te Wai in consenting. • There are no other direct impacts for consenting, as consent applications are processed under the legislation and the regional planning framework that is in place at that time. • Consenting considers the NPS-FM 2020 until such time as it is replaced or ceases to exist. • Adds a layer of complexity when processing consent applications. It can be harder to manage expectations of consent applicants and members of the public as to why we are still considering the NPS-FM (or not). |

Update – on the NPS-FM and Government announcements

Presentation to Environment Committee, 27 February 2024

Presenters: Fathima Iftikar, Matt Hickman, Shaun Andrewartha & Natasha Tomic



The Government reform agenda

- A roll back of the previous government's reform in many areas - clearly signalled during election campaign
- Gone: Natural & Built Environment Act and Spatial Planning Act
- Back to RMA framework for resource management decisions
- Repeal 3 Waters legislation
- Review and replace national direction, especially Freshwater and Biodiversity
- Remove consideration of Te Mana o Te Wai in consenting decisions
- Introduction of fast-track legislation – wider than RMA matters - Big infrastructure will happen.

Plus a lot more across climate change, Te Tiriti, public transport, urban development, infrastructure, roading ... **nearly every part of GW business is affected.**

Fast-track consenting

Attachment 3 to Report 24.69

- Progressing Fast Track Consenting Bill by 7 March
- Based on COVID fast-track legislation
- Select Committee process; a regional sector submission; limited ability to influence in reality; likely to be enacted by the end of 2024
- MfE - limited engagement with Iwi-Māori through PSGEs only
- Limited role in consenting process for GW once enacted
- GW role – only as compliance, monitoring and enforcement agency

NPS-FM and FW farm plan regulations

- NPS-FM deadline extended to 31 December 2027
- The exiting NPS-FM will be replaced within 18 to 24 months
- The new NPS-FM will consider *ways to rebalance Te Mana o te Wai to better reflect the interests of all water users*
- Progressing changes to the application of the Te Mana o Te Wai hierarchy in consenting through the planned RMA amendment bill (to be introduced in March)
- Freshwater farm plan regulations – making them more pragmatic and effective - ‘light touch’ implementation for now.

Implications for freshwater work programme

- Currently assessing the impact of the NPS-FM announcements on our FW related work programme – highly uncertain about the direction of the new NPS-FM.
- Implications for the timing and sequencing of the remaining FW related plan changes.
- Need to look for efficiencies (budgetary, resourcing, timing) to complete remaining FW related plan changes.
- NRP Plan Change 1 and RPS Change 1 will carry on as planned - we are still operating under the existing RMA framework.



Pātai / Questions?

Giving effect to Te Mana o Te Wai (NPS-FM 2020)



Figure 1: How regional councils must give effect to Te Mana o te Wai

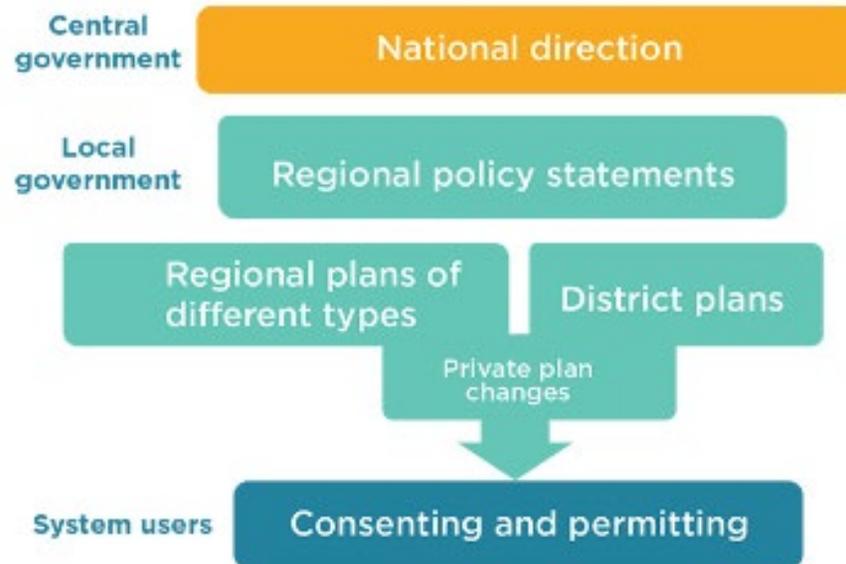
Te Mana o Te Wai hierarchy of obligations (NPS-FM 2020) Attachment 3 to Report 24.69

The hierarchy is incorporated into the objective of the NPS-FM:

- a) first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems
- b) second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water)
- c) third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future

RMA framework

RMA system



Environment Committee
27 February 2024
Report 24.55



For Information

WHAITUA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE – KAPITI AND WAIRARAPA COAST

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee about the progress of the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee and the development of the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua approach.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

Kāpiti

2. The Whaitua Kāpiti Committee (the Committee) was established by Council (*Establishment of the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee – Report 22.374*) in August 2022 to support Council giving effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM). Appointments to the Committee were completed in February 2023.
3. The Committee is using a Tiriti House model, which proposes a Tiriti approach to decision-making providing for equal recognition of and input from each house (Mana Whenua House and Kāwanatanga House). This partnership recognises both types of authorities (rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga) functioning together.

Wairarapa Coast

4. The Wairarapa Coast Whaitua was scheduled to begin in the second half of 2023 with the purpose of giving effect to the NPS-FM by the December 2024 deadline. The 2024 deadline has been extended until 2027. The timing for limit setting component of the National Objectives Framework is still to be determined as we learn more from government about the changes to the NPS-FM and our own Greater Wellington staff capacity in relation to other whaitua and plan changes.
5. The approach for the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua will be determined with mana whenua and community and this discussion has not begun in earnest yet although a number of early connections have occurred.

Te tātaritanga

Analysis

Kāpiti

Current stage of the Whaitua Kāpiti Tiriti Whare Committee:

6. Thirteen full-day Committee meetings have been held between March and December 2023, plus many additional caucus meetings of each whare.
7. The Committee has made joint decisions on a significant number of key topics including:
 - a Joint expression of Te Mana o te Wai and planning objectives.
 - b Identified Freshwater Management Units (FMU) across the whaitua.
 - c Visions for the whaitua and each FMU.
 - d Combined schedule of mana whenua and community freshwater values.
 - e Policy objectives for environmental outcomes, including for mahinga kai.
 - f A shared ecosystem modelling approach for the setting of targets.
 - g The majority of the water quality targets.
 - h A significant number of regulatory and non-regulatory methods including priority actions for FMUs.
8. These decisions have been developed into a draft Whaitua Implementation Plan (WIP) report and accompanying draft section 32 content for the forthcoming plan change for Kāpiti. This is currently being reviewed and refined by the Committee and a timeframe for presentation of the WIP to Council following their final meeting on 29 April 2024 is to be proposed.
9. Dr Mahina-a-rangi Baker has stepped down as Taurite (co-chair) and representative for Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai. Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai have advised they wish to make a new appointment and when this is received formally, we will prepare a paper for Council.
10. Caleb Royal, representative for Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, has been subsequently appointed as the Taurite for the mana whenua whare of the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee.
11. Nigel Corry has sent a letter updating Kāpiti mana whenua partners of the current progress and intended remaining timeline for the Whaitua Kāpiti process and Greater Wellington’s commitment to it.

Wairarapa Coast

12. The Wairarapa Coast Whaitua approach is to take a whole of the catchment perspective with the intent to develop an implementation-led catchment plan that is broader in focus than freshwater quality.
13. This catchment plan would encompass other related activities, such as, freshwater action plans, freshwater farm plans (FWFP), community catchment action plans. Work is underway on how these examples could be woven together in an integrated plan and connected process or processes, which can then be tested against NPS-FM requirements as well as lessons from Kāpiti and other Whaitua processes.

14. The focus for 2024/25 is to support catchment community groups to form and work towards a catchment action plan (both under the definition of a community action plan and a Freshwater action plan under NPS-FM).
15. Greater Wellington staff are working with the Wairarapa Catchment Collective to establish. We are working closely with the Project's partners (Ministry for Primary Industries and Mountains to Sea) to coordinate attendance at meetings, share funding opportunities and create joint work programmes.
16. We are working on other related projects e.g., FWFP and the development of the Catchment Context, Challenges, Values (CCCV) part of the farm plan.

Ngā hua ahumoni

Financial implications

Kāpiti

17. Any requirements for committee beyond the acceptance of the WIP by Council will be considered separately.

Wairarapa Coast

18. The financial and wider resourcing implications are still to be determined.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori

Implications for Māori

Kāpiti

19. The Terms of Reference for the Whaitua Kāpiti Committee were drafted in conjunction with, and approved by, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust, Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki, Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the wider Whaitua Committee.
20. In upholding the Terms and our Tiriti House commitments, the Whaitua Kāpiti process is developed in conjunction with mana whenua representatives.

Wairarapa Coast

21. The approach for the Wairarapa Coast Whaitua will be determined with mana whenua.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

Kapiti Outstanding decisions – what's next?

22. While originally planning to complete by the end of 2023, the Committee has agreed to three additional meetings to complete their WIP with the intention of their final meeting on 29 April 2024. Completion of the WIP will occur promptly following this meeting prior to presentation to Council.
23. The outstanding decisions for the Committee are:
 - a Remaining water quality target setting, including for mahinga kai attributes.
 - b Water quantity management.

- c Final review and sign-off of the WIP.

Wairarapa Coast

- 24. The timing of the establishment of a Whaitua committee is dependent on agreed phasing of the Kāpiti WIP and Plan Change and a Ruamāhanga Plan Change. These decisions are going to Council in April 2024.

Signatories

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Writers | Tash Styles – Catchment Manager, Wairarapa Coast Michele Frank – Catchment Manager, Kapiti |
| Approvers | Nicola Patrick – Director, Catchment Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|---|
| <p><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></p> <p>The Environment Committee has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation and review of Council’s environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators to improve environmental outcomes for the Wellington Region’s land, water, air, biodiversity, natural resources, parks and reserves, and coastal marine area.</p> |
| <p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>The Whaitua Programme contributes to Council’s obligations to give effect to the National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) through engagement with mana whenua and the community.</p> |
| <p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>This report was prepared by Catchment and reviewed by Te Hunga Whiriwhiri.</p> |
| <p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>There are no known specific risks and impacts related to this report beyond the constrained circumstances as outlined.</p> |

Environment Committee
27 February 2023
Report 24.53



For Information

ENVIROSCHOOLS UPDATE

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Environment Committee on the Wellington region Enviroschools programme - a programme that empowers young people and their communities to connect in, learn about, and creatively take action together for our taiao. The report will also explain the role of Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) and integration and alignment opportunities to connect communities to nature and protect and restore ecosystems.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. Enviroschools is a network of schools and early childhood education (ECE) centres across Aotearoa guided by specialised Enviroschools facilitators. The network is supported at the national level by Toimata Foundation with core funding from the Ministry for the Environment. At a regional level councils partner with Toimata and invest in regional Enviroschools teams, which receive training, resources and support from Toimata.
3. Greater Wellington has been contributing to the provision of Enviroschools in the Wellington region since 2007 by providing ongoing funding to Toimata who in turn contract Enviroschools facilitators. Greater Wellington has two FTE that deliver leadership and coordination to support the Enviroschools facilitators in the region and also 'hosts' the Enviroschools team in the Wellington and Masterton offices.
4. The Enviroschools team sits within the Community Capability and Change (CCC) team in the Ecosystems and Community Business Unit and Delivery Function of the Environment Group. Given its different governance and accountability structure with the connections to Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and Toimata Foundation, Enviroschools is a distinct entity within the CCC team. However, there is a shared focus on working with community to connect with, understand and take action for the environment, and enable space for kaitiaki within community projects and actively seek work opportunities to enhance Māori outcomes.
5. The CCC team is the centre for how the Environment Group engage with communities and organisations and will take a lead in building specialised skills and implement approaches and ways of working for Greater Wellington's delivery functions. While this team will support our community engagement, direct engagement, relationship

management and information exchange will continue to be a part of many roles across the Environment Group. For example, a recent survey of community engagement underway across the Environment Group showed that nearly all the external relationships with community groups undertaking pest management are held by the Pest Animals team in the Environmental Operations business unit.

Te tātaritanga Analysis

6. The Enviroschools facilitators' work in local areas is funded by councils. The programme looks different across the region depending on the level of funding and the contract outcomes that have been agreed between each council and Toimata. The contract value contributes to the number of facilitator hours that are available and delivery is often aligned to specific education goals in the contract, such as a focus on waste, or the requirement to connect with as many schools and centres as possible. The table below illustrates the resourcing and scope of Enviroschools across the region.

| Council | Contract value (facilitator FTE) | Focus | Comments |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Kāpiti Coast District Council | 0.3 FTE | Broad sustainability education | Proposed increase 2024/25 with increased waste focus |
| Porirua City Council | 0.4 FTE | Broad sustainability education | Proposed increase 2024/25 with increased waste focus, seeking connection with more schools |
| Wellington City Council | 1.6 FTE | Broad sustainability education | Wellington City Council has separate waste educator |
| Hutt City Council | 1.6 FTE | Broad sustainability education, World of Waste Tours | Connection with as many schools as possible |
| Upper Hutt City Council | 0.35 FTE | Broad sustainability education | Proposed increase 2024/25 with increased waste focus |
| South Wairarapa District Council | 0.2 FTE | Broad sustainability education | |
| Carterton District Council | 0.15 FTE | Broad sustainability education | |
| Masterton District Council | 0.4 FTE | Broad sustainability education | |

7. The Enviroschools facilitators are skilled at guiding schools and centres through a holistic process to learn and take action in their learning environment, neighbourhoods and beyond. The Enviroschools programme contains many learning resources and techniques, allowing each school or centre's programme to be shaped to meet the needs of the school, students, and community including mana whenua. The three examples below illustrate some of the ways that the facilitators work with schools and community groups.
- a **Douglas Park School** in Masterton has been involved in Enviroschools for about 20 years. They have worked closely with the local Enviroschools facilitator through this time as they follow the interest of their students, board and community. Some of the many projects they have embarked on are:
 - i Student groups have examined the environmental impact of the whole school operations, from lighting, compost and recycling, and developed solutions such as promoting nude food and reusing paper and cardboard.
 - ii An investment in solar panels over the past 15 years, committing to sustainable building and most recently becoming a certified net Carbon Zero school.
 - iii Learning about the history of their school environment, including connecting with mana whenua to understand the names of waterways, which led to the 'daylighting' of a culvert on the school's boundary.
 - iv Involvement in tracking and trapping training along with other students in the region
 - b **Worser Bay School** has also been involved in Enviroschools for many years, with our facilitators leading the school through a number of whole-school inquiry projects on various aspects of sustainability, most recently a study of the history of their school site (formerly a Pā) and the local environment. Worser Bay School also connects with many other Environmental Education providers working within Te Whanganui a Tara, and last year was deeply involved in the Moanamana project for schools within the Motu Kairangi area. As part of this project students used the Enviroschools action learning framework to survey the local community to gauge support for a temporary marine reserve at Worser Bay.
 - c **An upcoming Community event in Kāpiti in May 2024** is an example of how facilitators develop events for students and Kaiako to explore a particular area of sustainability, curriculum area, or connect with local experts. The event at Ngā Manu Nature Reserve, is a three-day programme for local schools and early childhood centres. Our facilitator has connected a local puppeteer who has secured Arts Foundation funding to develop a puppet show about Short Tailed bats and being afraid of the dark, with Ngā Manu Nature Reserve which is involved in the conservation of Te Pua o te Reinga (Dactylanthus) a key food source for the Pekapeka (short tailed bat). School and centre groups will get to Ngā Manu with the help of the Greater Wellington Student Transport Grant to see the show which provides an arts response to environmental issues, tour through the nature reserve to learn about the conservation of Te Pua o te Reinga, and with involvement from Mana Whenua representatives, learning about the importance

of these taonga species to local iwi. Through connecting key groups that she has developed strong relationships with, our facilitator is creating a high-impact event for many young people and their whānau across the Kāpiti district.

8. The example above is a good illustration of what Enviroschools Facilitators do best. A key focus is on building relationships - with schools, staff at Greater Wellington and local councils, local providers of environmental education, Mana Whenua and conservation groups. These relationships enable them to connect and curate the best and most appropriate opportunities for our young people to learn and take action for their environment. Having a range of organisations and experts working together creates synergies that would not be possible working alone, ensuring tailored delivery and engagement with schools.
9. The work of Enviroschools and the CCC team centres on collaborating with others for the greater environmental good. By providing guidance or a little time or investment we enable community events or initiatives to get underway, and working in partnership with other organisations helps to share knowledge and build capability. An indicator of success of Enviroschools is when the school uses the framework on sustainability projects without facilitator involvement. The CCC team has a similar approach and aims to support communities and community groups to be self-sustaining. For this reason, much of the work of Enviroschools is 'under the radar', and visibility of Greater Wellington in some of the projects that the CCC team is involved with is not always prominent. Report 23.97 - *Visibility of GW within environment collaborative projects and education programmes*, written for the Environment Committee on 27 April 2023 explains the co-branding rationale further.
10. One of the five guiding principles of Enviroschools is Te Ao Māori. This means honouring tangata whenua of this land, and when envisioning and taking action for a sustainable future in our community, doing so alongside local hapū. This is very closely aligned with the Mauri Tūhono framework and the Enviroschools facilitators are committed to establishing long term relationships with Mana Whenua and working alongside Greater Wellington to enact the framework.
11. Many of the projects that the CCC team is involved with have an educational element, and the Enviroschools Facilitators bring expertise in education, facilitation and community contacts to the wider team.

Ngā hua ahumoni

Financial implications

12. Any financial implications arising from this report will be met from existing budgets.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori

Implications for Māori

13. The report demonstrates that the Enviroschools team have a working understanding of Te Ao Māori and where possible are implementing the programme alongside local hapū.

Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi
Consideration of climate change

14. This report demonstrates how young people and their communities are supported to connect with, learn about and take action for te taiao and in doing so, address climate change through the EnviroSchools Programme.

Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatories

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Writers | Chris Montgomerie – Team Leader EnviroSchools Jude Chittock – Team Leader Community Capability and Change David Boone – Manager Ecosystems and Community |
| Approvers | Jack Mace – Director Delivery Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|---|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Environment Committee has responsibility to consider all matters across the development and implementation of the work programmes of Greater Wellington's Environment Group. |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> Development and implementation of related work programmes fall under the core activities of the 2021-2061 Long Term Plan |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> Internal consultation was limited to officers of Greater Wellington's Environment Group |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> This report covers the full breadth of the Community Capability and Change Team work programmes, and equally a broad range of environmental, reputational, legal, financial and health, safety and wellbeing risks and associated implications. |

Environment Committee
23 November 2023
Report 24.29



For Information

FISH PASSAGE PROJECT UPDATE

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To provide the Environment Committee (the Committee) with an update on project work aimed at improving fish passage in the region.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The improving fish passage regional project began in January 2021 and is co-funded by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). It involves a five-year programme of work with a total value of \$4.6 million of which \$2 million comes from MfE. We are currently in year three of the project and are making good progress with the agreed work programme.
3. The purpose of the project is to identify, and where possible to remediate in-stream barriers to fish migration. The project also encompasses training elements and monitoring. The project has already seen many achievements and is on target to meet all contracted deliverables, however there will remain many fish passage barriers as the scale of the problem is such that much more could be done.
4. The project works in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and the sharing of knowledge between the two partners has been a key highlight of the first two years. Greater Wellington and Te Rūnanga operational teams have worked together on a number of remediation projects and monitoring of outcomes. Greater Wellington staff are currently connecting with other iwi partners across the region.

Ngā hua ahumoni

Financial implications

5. The project is fully funded until 2026. At this point funding for field staff and partners will end. Under the National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM), Council is required to produce a fish passage action plan and complete actions to improve fish passage. A plan will need to be in place to ensure we have an action plan and are funding its implementation beyond the life of this project.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori

Implications for Māori

- 6. The project provides funding for one Full-Time Equivalent based at Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira. This provides them with capacity to complete operational works during the life of the project. Once funding ends in 2026, there will be a reduction in their capacity.
- 7. There are further opportunities for collaborative working with all other iwi in the region. Relationship building is underway, and officers are actively working with iwi to identify work opportunities.

Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi

Consideration of climate change

- 8. There are no climate change considerations.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachment

| Number | Title |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Improving Fish Passage in the Wellington Region Presentation |

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatories

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Writers | Ashley Webby – Senior Biodiversity Advisor Fish Passage Janet Lawson – Team Leader Environment Projects David Boone – Manager Ecosystems and Community |
| Approvers | Jack Mace – Director Delivery Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|--|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Committee has the specific responsibility to oversee the development and review of Council's environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators. |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> The project is funded under the Long Term Plan and contributes outcomes to the Environment Group business plan. |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> There was no internal consultation. |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> There are no known risks and impacts. |

Improving fish passage in the Wellington Region



Ashley Webby

Senior Biodiversity Advisor – Fish Passage Project Lead - GWRC

Luke Barnsley

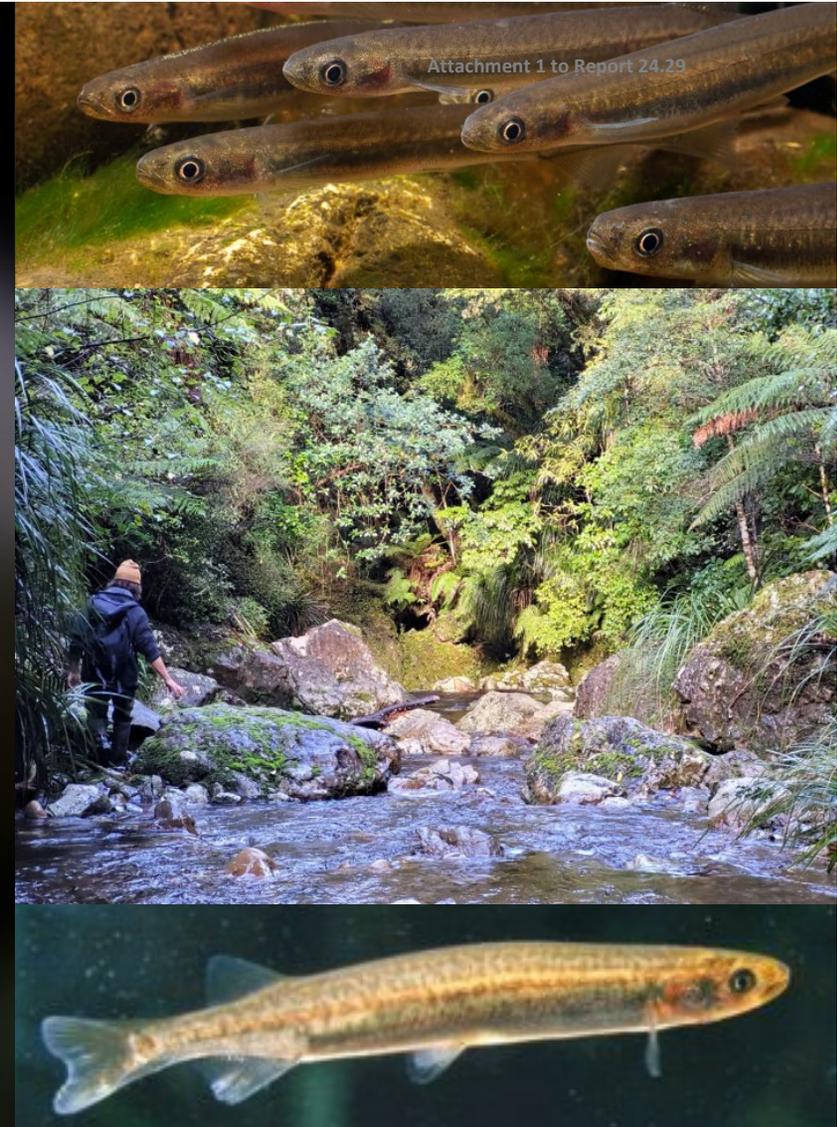
Environmental Operations Manager – Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira

Fish passage project

- Partnered with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira,
- MFE \$2,000,000.00 from 2022 – June 2026
- Total \$4,662,000 with GWRC LTP money

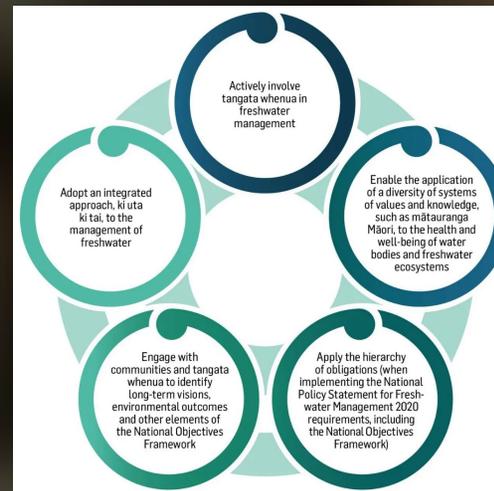
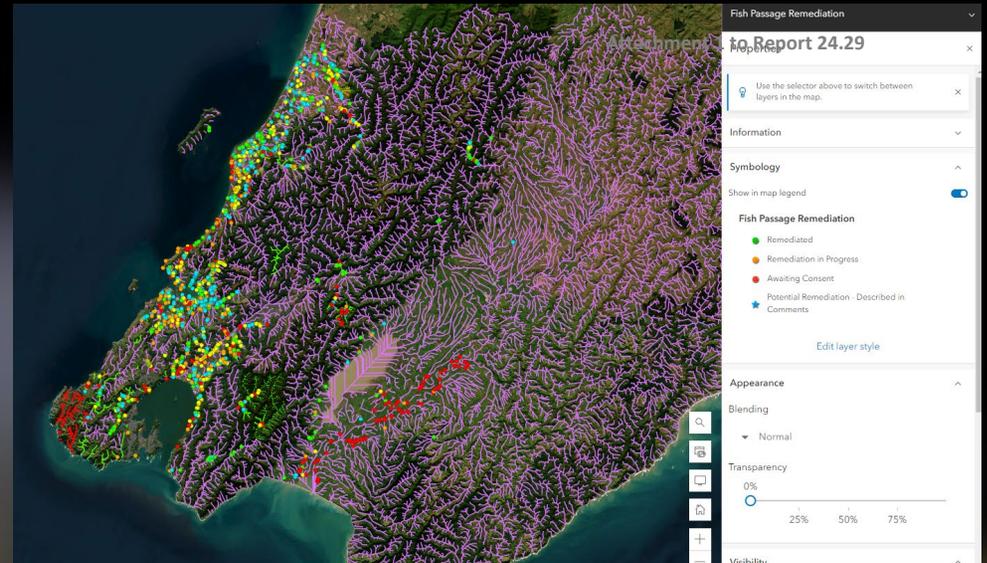
Annual work plan 23-24

- Complete 250 instream assessments
- Complete 110 remediations
- Employment of two summer students
- Carry out two fish passage training workshops
- Monitoring of fish passage remediation success at 5 sites
- Connecting with Mana Whenua partners
- Carrying out more assessments in the Wairarapa



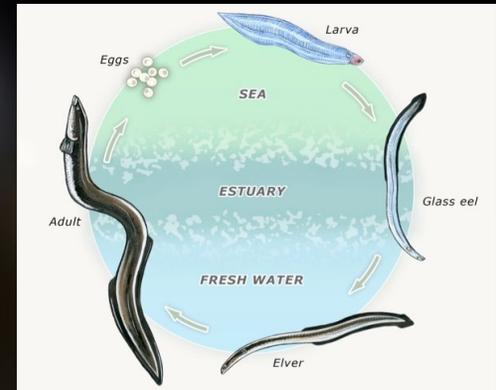
Key Outcomes

- Working with Ngāti Toa (Treaty partnership modelled projects). Along with our 8 training workshops that we have run this has enhanced capability building within the region
- The project is a multi-agency partnership leading to better inputs, advocacy, support and integration. We are linked in the territorial authorities, NZTA, Kiwi Rail, iwi and hapu and local councils.
- We have used Capex to assess and remediate Greater Wellington Regional Council structures
- We have assessed 250 structures and have remediated 120 structures



What is fish passage and why do we need it?

- NZ freshwater fish species require unimpeded movement to access suitable habitat and resources.
- Migratory species are at particular risk because they need access between the water and the sea to complete their lifecycles.
- Instream structures (such as culverts, flap gates, fords, and weirs) that are inadequately designed, installed and/or maintained can present a barrier to fish.
- The consequence = reduction in distribution, abundance & biodiversity of fish



What we do

- Find Barriers
- Assess barriers
- Remediate barriers
- Fish passage success monitoring
- Consent advice / feedback
- Run training workshops



Attachment 1 to Report 24.29

Citizen Science

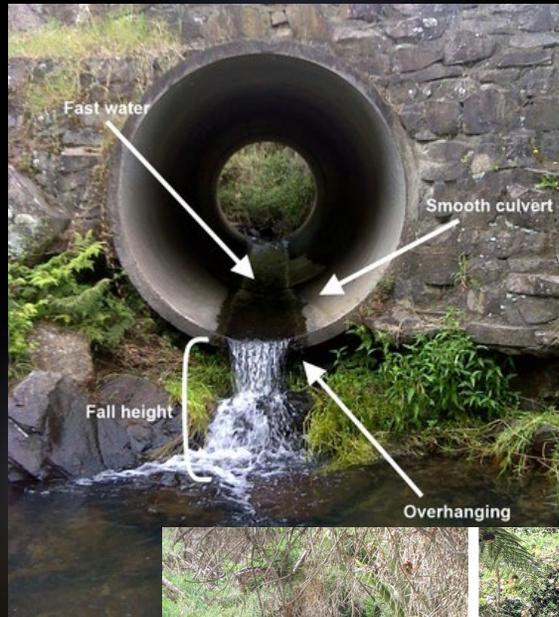
- Catch & release**
Please enter information for each fis... >
[MORE INFO](#)
- Fish Passage Assessment**
Enter data for the assessment of riv... >
[MORE INFO](#)
- NZ Flood Pics**
Share photos of NZ Floods >
[MORE INFO](#)
- Snow Depth**
How deep is the snow at your place? >
[MORE INFO](#)

Saved Surveys [UPLOAD ALL](#)

- Fish Passage Assessment**
Mar 1, 2023 1:47 PM
- Fish Passage Assessment**
Mar 16, 2023 11:59 AM
- Fish Passage Assessment**
Mar 16, 2023 12:59 PM

Things that impede fish passage

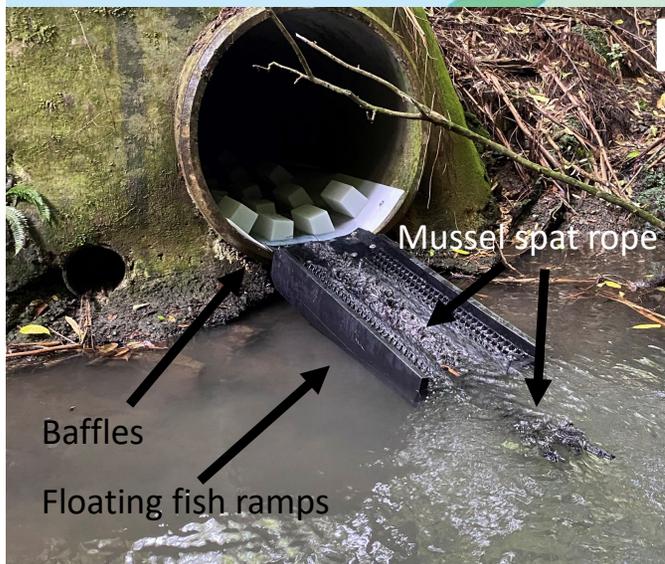
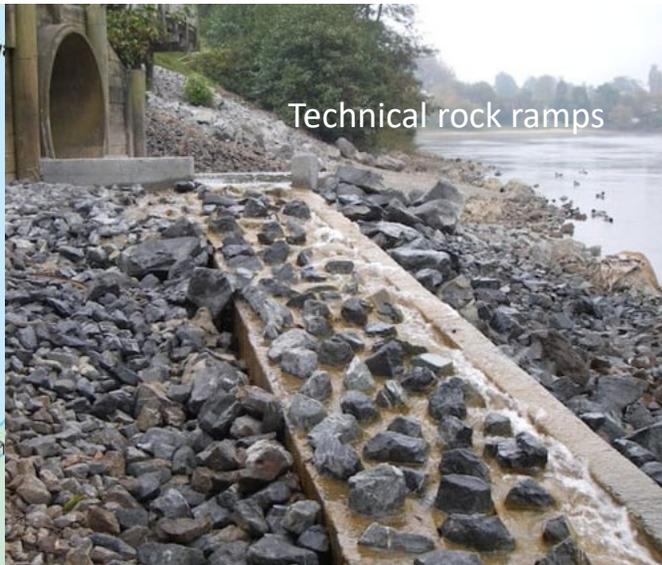
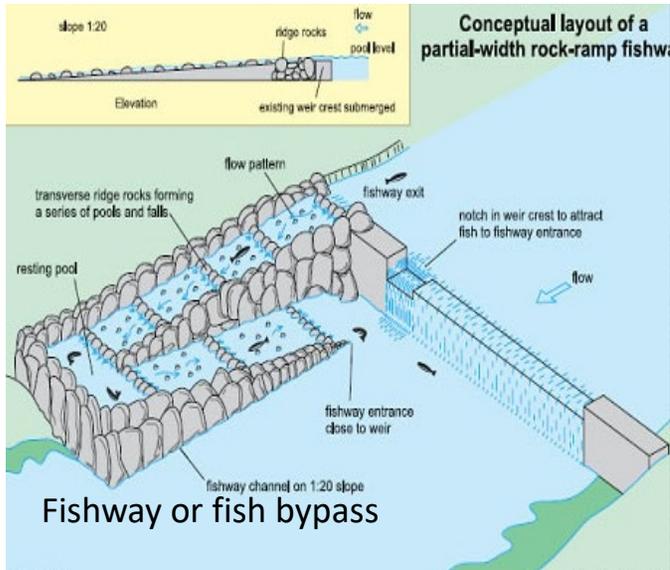
- Slope
- Water velocity
- Length of a structure
- Sharp edges
- Vertical drops
- Shallow water
- Channel restriction
- Smoothness of structures
- Some barriers are built or not remediate to protect some venerable species



Fish and their climbing and swimming abilities

- Stickers
- Mouth grasping
- Jumping
- Bad body shape for navigating barriers
- No adaptations for climbing, or not needed due to preferred habitats
- Just because they are good climbers it doesn't mean we should leave barriers, it takes a lot of energy to climb





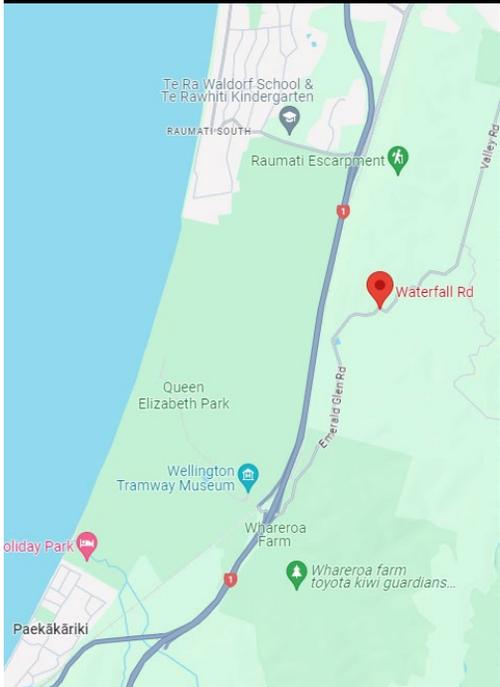




Before and after remediation



Case study



Case study

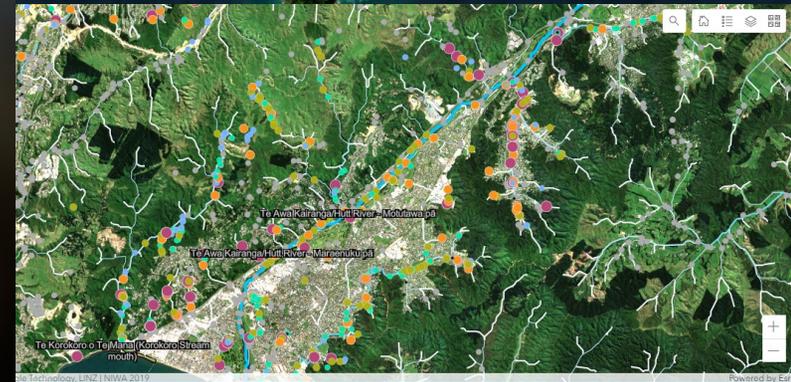
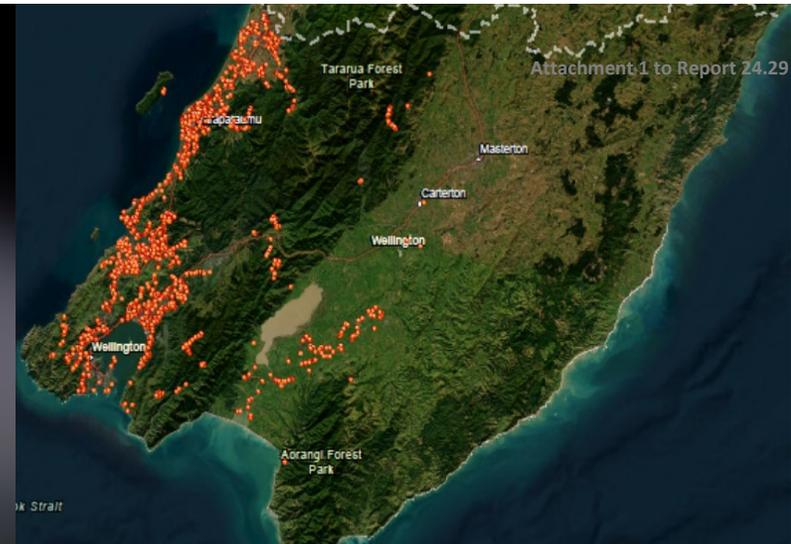
- We visually saw lots of fish downstream of the barrier
- Environmental DNA samples confirmed that there were only key species missing above the barrier meaning that they were not getting above it
- Eels above the barrier are likely long living residents as both shortfin and longfin eels reproduce once
- We will monitor this time next year to see if the results change as a measure of fish passage remediation success
- We can then make appropriate changes to our design if need be



| Site | | Upstream of the barrier | | | | | | Downstream of the barrier | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ScientificName | CommonName | Rep 1 | Rep 2 | Rep 3 | Rep 4 | Rep 5 | Rep 6 | Rep 1 | Rep 2 | Rep 3 | Rep 4 | Rep 5 | Rep 6 |
| Gobiomorphus huttoni | Redfin bully | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3618 | 4304 | 3276 | 4063 | 4394 | 3715 |
| Anguilla dieffenbachii | Longfin eel; tuna; kūwharuwharu; reherehe; kirirua | 9 | 366 | 262 | 176 | 166 | 321 | 1881 | 1981 | 1652 | 1798 | 1202 | 3267 |
| Anguilla australis | Shortfin eel; tuna; hao; aopori; hikumutu | 904 | 2018 | 1316 | 1239 | 1026 | 882 | 444 | 419 | 1386 | 748 | 715 | 886 |
| Galaxias fasciatus | Banded kokopu; kokōpu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1113 | 1521 | 2016 | 1529 | 1046 | 2529 |
| Galaxias maculatus | Inanga; īnanga | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 427 | 6 | 402 | 274 | 321 | 344 |
| Galaxias argenteus/postvectis | Giant or shortjaw kokopu; kokōpu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 77 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Galaxias argenteus | Giant kokopu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

KPIs for this project

- A minimum of 1,000 instream structures assessed
- All GW Parks and Flood Protection instream structures assessed and lodged in the NZFPAT by June 2026
- 450 structures remediated by June 2026.
- Fish passage effectiveness monitoring will be undertaken at 20 remediation sites by June 2026.
- Nine fish passage training workshops involving private landowners, mana whenua and instream infrastructure owners will be held over the course of the project.

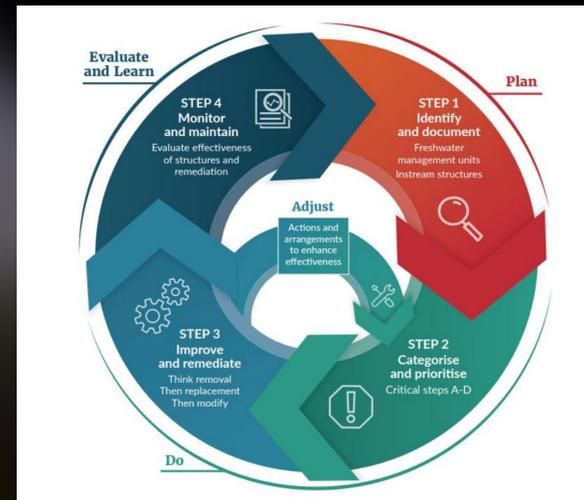


Fish passage action plan

- Funding ends 2026
- The NPS-FM 2020 directs regional councils to develop an action plan to meet our obligations to revitalise te taiao to achieve target attribute states and environmental outcomes
- We have already been doing work that links in with which the fish passage action plan is asking us to do
- We need to think about maintenance and longevity of our structures
- At the moment, we are working with the willing but how we can enforce this in the future

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020

January 2024



1. **Identify and document** fish passage barriers
2. **Categorise and prioritise** fish passage barriers
3. **Improve and remediate** fish passage barriers
4. **Monitor and maintain** fish passage remediations

Attachment 1 to Report 24.29

Questions?

Environment Committee
 27 February 2024
 Report 24.80



FLOOD FORECASTING AND FLOOD MONITORING NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee (the Committee) on the progress of two initiatives currently being delivered by the Knowledge and Insights function to improve our flood resilience.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The Knowledge and Insights Function would like to share key updates with the Committee on two initiatives:
 - a **Flood Forecasting** – an overview of flood forecasting, the improvements programme and current progress.
 - b **Flood Monitoring Network Improvements** – an overview of the approach being taken by Greater Wellington and a deeper dive into the network risks and issues.
3. [Attachment 1](#) is a presentation which will also update the Committee on the recent Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) funding made available to Greater Wellington for early flood warning systems upgrades.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachment

| Number | Title |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Flood Forecasting and Flood Monitoring Network Improvements Programme |

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatories

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Writers | Braden Crocker – Team Leader Water Resilience Andy Brown – Team leader Knowledge Water |
| Approvers | Evan Harrison – Manager Knowledge Dave Hipkins – Director Knowledge & Insights |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|--|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Environment Group has the specific responsibility to oversee the development and review of Council's environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators and Council's regional resilience priorities |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> This program supports the Environment Long Term Plan objective of safeguarding our communities from major flooding. |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> This paper has been worked through with the environment group leadership team before submission to the Committee. |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> This paper provides an update on two work programs specifically about managing risk to the community. |

Flood Forecasting & Flood Monitoring Network Improvements Programme

Update for Environment Committee February 2024

Purpose

This presentation aims to provide an update on two initiative currently being delivered by Knowledge & Insights to improve our flood resilience.

- **Flood Forecasting** – The session will cover the upgrades programme and current progress.
- **Flood Monitoring Network Improvements** – The session will cover flood monitoring, risk and upgrades.

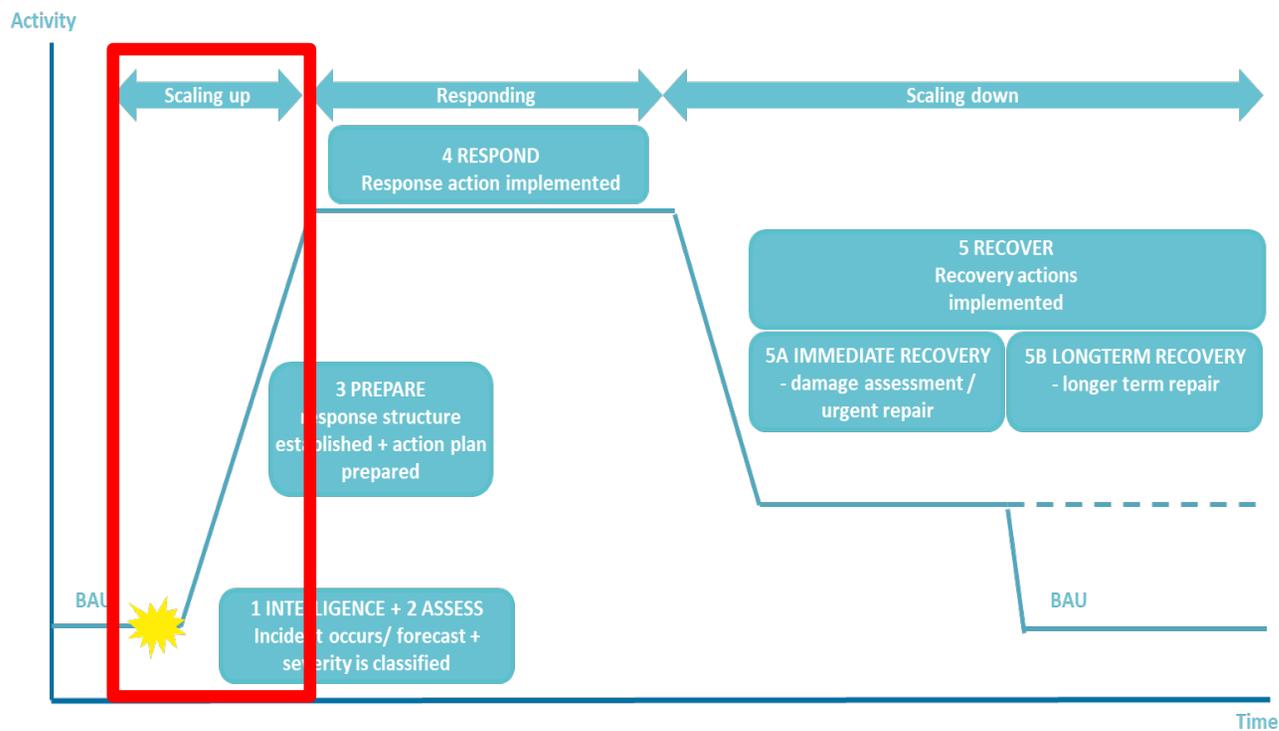
This follows presentations to the Committee on the *‘Potential impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle’* and from our colleagues at WREMO on *‘Lessons learnt from cyclone Gabrielle and Regional Exercises’*

The risk

- 200,000 people living in flood prone areas across the Region.
- 80,000 buildings in flood prone areas across the region.



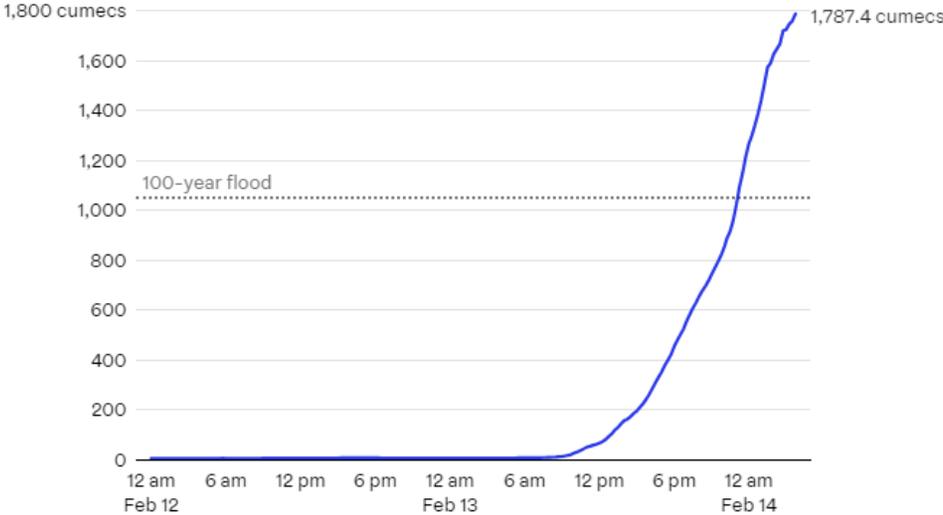
- Planning Controls
- River & Catchment Management
- Engineering Controls
- Emergency Management



Why is it important to us? – The Risk

Esk River flow rate at Waipunga Bridge

Measured in cumecs (cubic metres/second). This site stopped sending data at 3:45am.



Esk Valley Flood Damage – The Guardian

Chart: Kate Newton - Source: [Hawke's Bay Regional Council](#)

What are we doing about it? – Programme

In 2019 GWRC commenced the Flood Risk Management Programme to address the three key challenges;

- **Limited alignment in response procedures across GWRC and WREMO**
- **Limited forecasting capability currently**
- **Low level of risk awareness within communities**

The objectives of the Flood Risk Management programme are to;

- Reduce the risk to life and damage to property from flooding through proactive emergency management.
- Establish a clear, consistent, cross agency response procedure to prepare, respond and recovery from flood events.
- Establish a warning system that allows for proactive flood risk management by communities and emergency management.
- Builds awareness in communities at risk of flooding to the risk they face and the actions they can take to protect themselves and their property.

This can be summarised as providing the; **“The right information to the right people, in the right way at the right time to allow the right action”**

The programme is being delivered through 3 interlinked workstreams;

Flood Response

- Flood response procedures
- Training & exercise programme
- Emergency Action Plans
- Contractor flood response plans

Flood Warning

- Flood forecasting
- Flood warning protocols
- Automated warning systems
- Flood monitoring network improvements

Flood Awareness

- Improved community resilience
- Key messaging

Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Funding

Eastern Wairarapa Recovery and Resilience work: Early flood warning systems upgrade – Installation of early warning Greater Wellington Regional Council - \$1,250,000 systems will build greater resilience for communities in isolated areas. This funding will support engineering assessments and stalling well improvements at critical flood warning sites, satellite communication back systems, and infrastructure improvements and gauging camera installation for high-flow gauging.

- There are criteria for us to adhere to including;
 - Must be of benefit to the Eastern Hills.
 - Must be spent by 30th June 2025.
- We are currently developing the project schedules and planning the projects that could fall under this funding

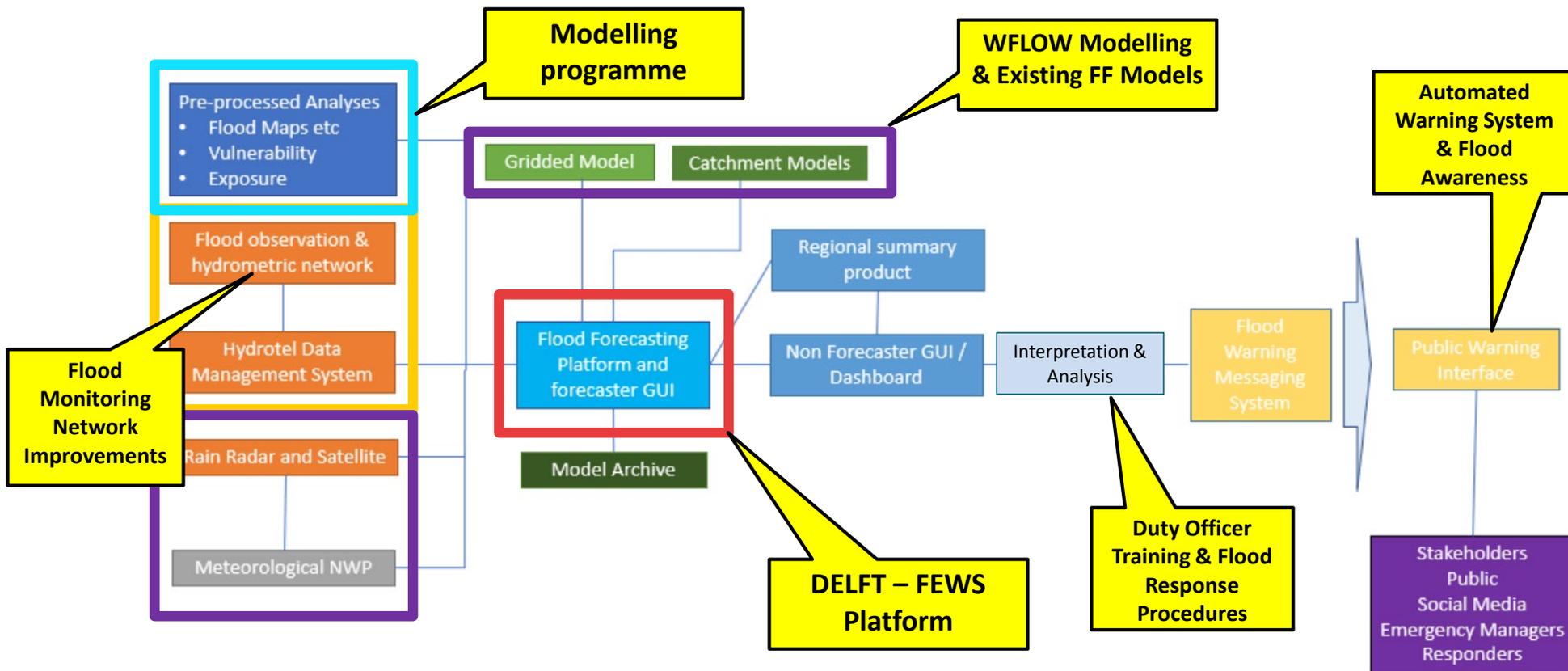


Tinui Flooding in Cyclone Gabrielle – NZ Herald

Flood Forecasting



Components – Flood Forecasting



What are we doing about it? – Flood Forecasting

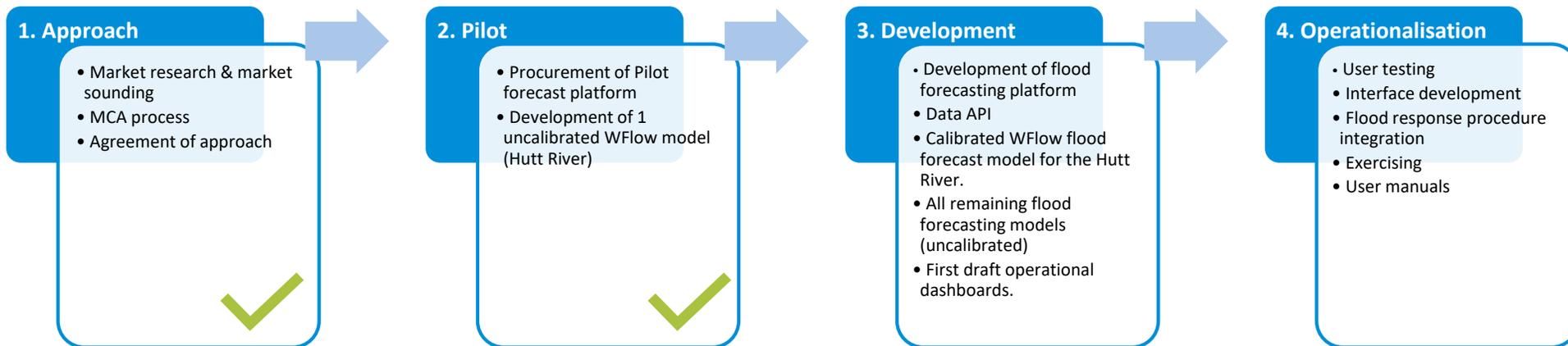
Objectives

This project seeks to;

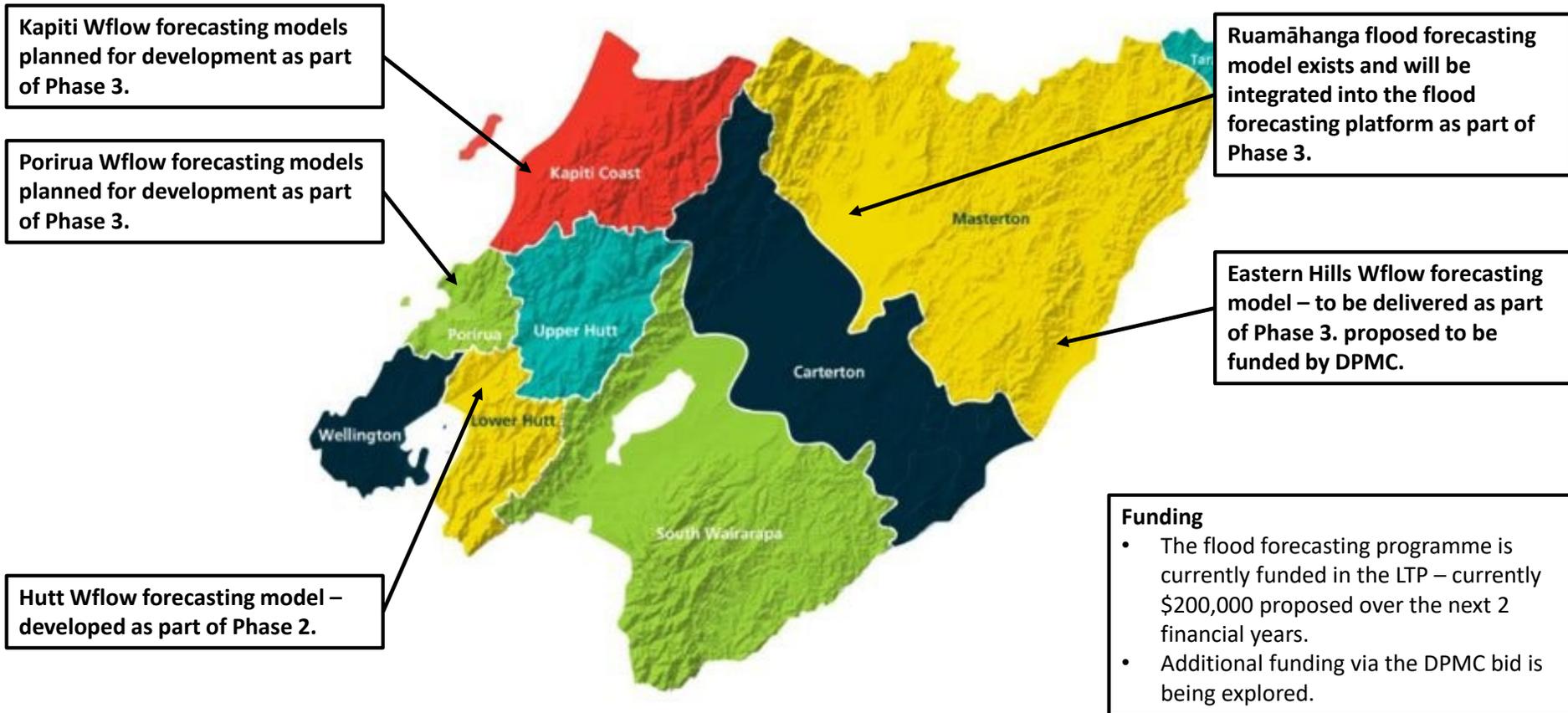
- Progressively improve GWRC's Flood forecasting capability so that we can provide meaningful and timely flood warnings to reduce damage to property and prevent loss of life.

This supports the flood incident management teams ability to provide;

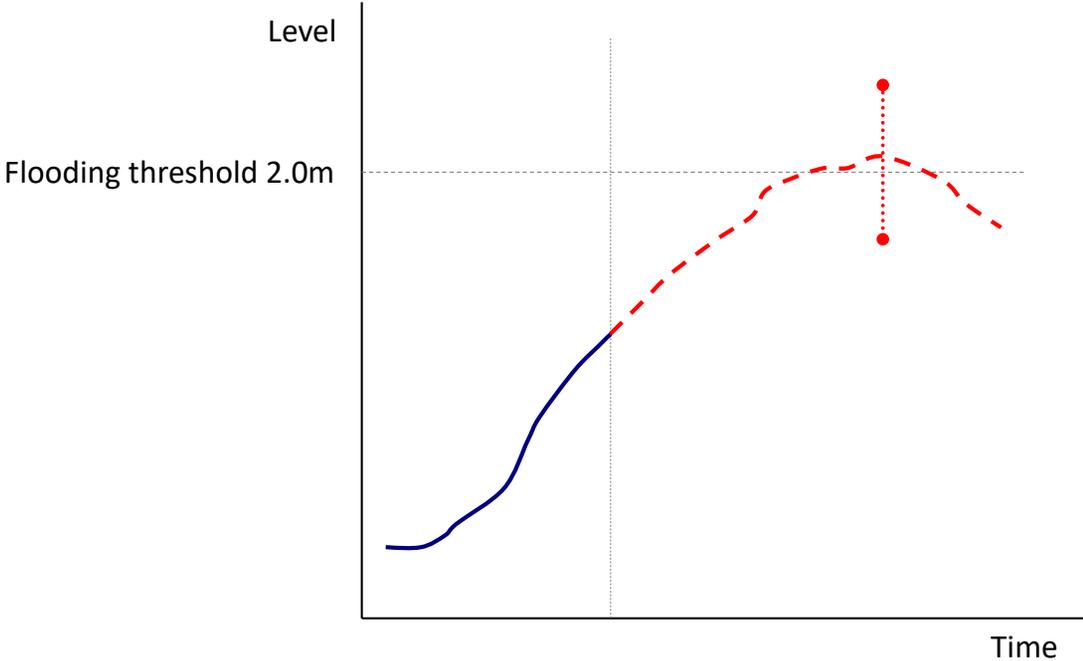
'The right information to the right people, in the right way at the right time to allow the right action'



What are we doing about it? – Flood Forecasting

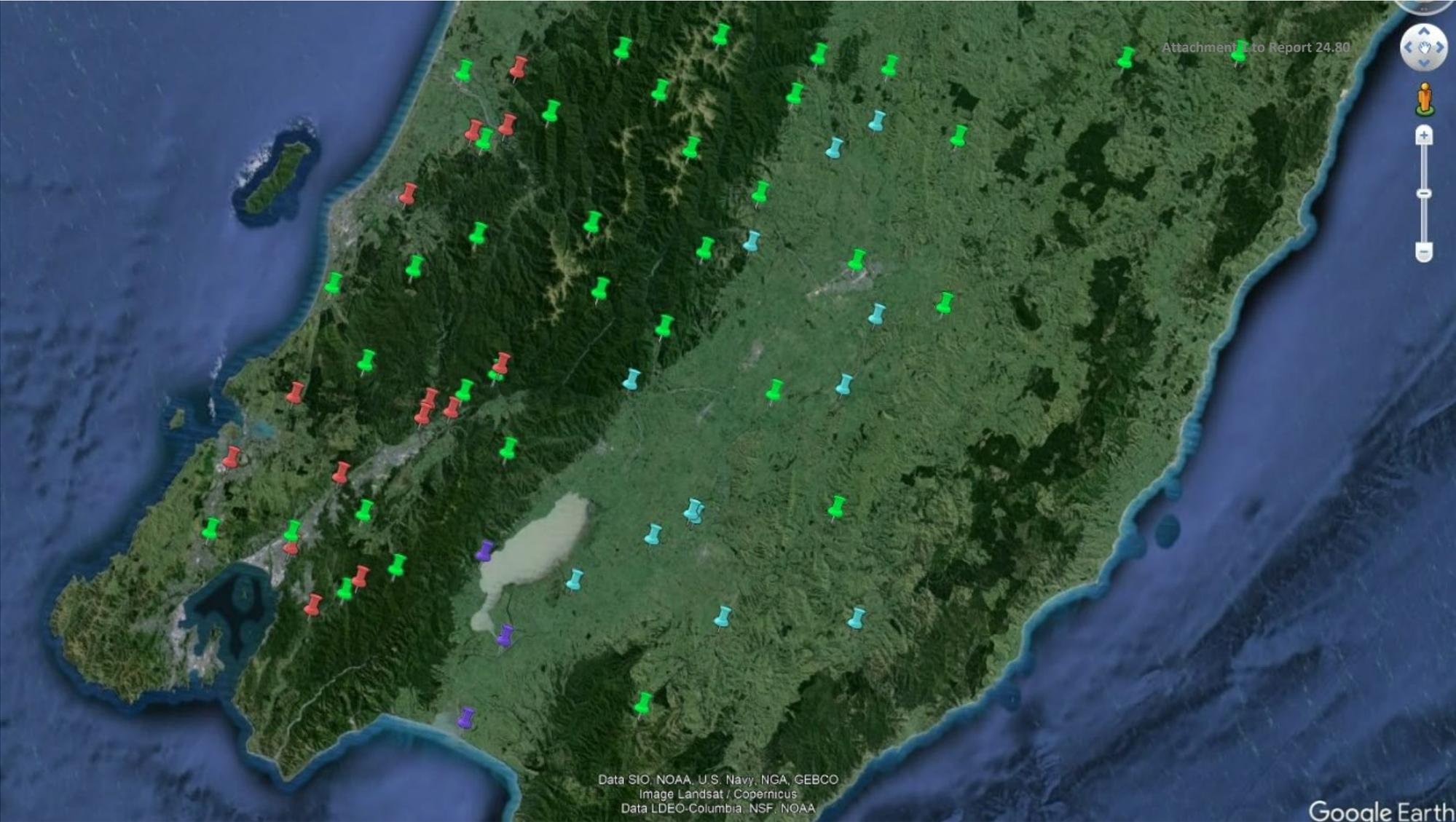


Forecast Uncertainty



| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Observed river level | — | Predicted level (median) | 2.02 m |
| Forecast level | - - - | | |
| Model Calibration | +/- 0.1 m | Probability or forecast spread | 20 % |

Flood Monitoring Network



Our challenge – Flood monitoring network

- GW owns and operates a network of river level recording sites throughout the Wellington Region. This network is comprised of telemetered and non-telemetered water level recording stations. Upgrade is required to provide for these functions as the condition of GW's network has deteriorated over time due to:
 - due to lack of high flow gauging infrastructure;
 - Constrains over routine maintenance of infrastructure;
 - practical constraints;
 - limited resources (specialist staff) for maintenance and gauging.
- As a result:
 - GW no longer has the ability to measure flow under high flow (flood) conditions at a number of sites.
 - There is low confidence in GW's understanding of large floods at some sites.

This puts our communities at risk and impacts the accuracy of flood hazard models and flood forecast models.



Roading damage after Canterbury floods in 2021 - RNZ

Flood Network Improvements Programme aims to:

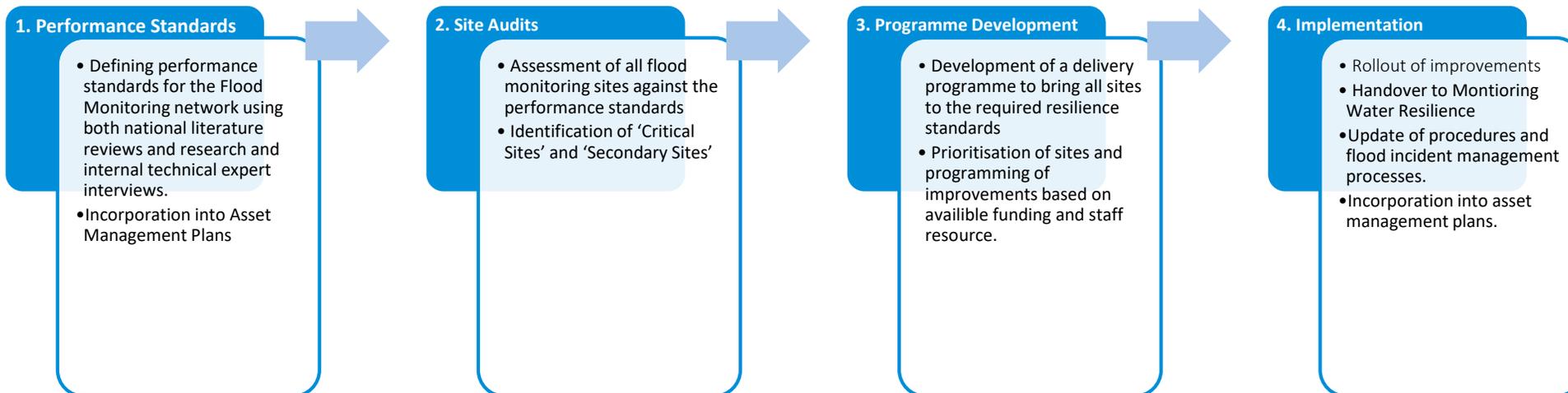
- Upgrade Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GW) flood monitoring network to allow for resilient, and safe flood monitoring across the region to a sufficient standard to allow for proactive flood warning and response.

With three clear objectives;

- Provide, upgrade and repair infrastructure at key sites to enable high flow gauging.
- Obtain specialist equipment and resources to facilitate gauging.
- Improve the resilience of the network at critical flood management sites

Programme has been reset in 2023 following the Cyclone Gabrielle flooding and resultant communications failures – these lessons have been learnt and drawn into the Improvements Programme.

Our Approach – Flood monitoring network improvements



This programme is supported by additional feasibility studies including;

- **Radar feasibility Study** – to determine the need, and implementability of a new radar in the Wellington Region.
- **Eastern Hills & Remote catchments monitoring study** - To identify gaps in the network and the best way to fill them.
- **Dams Monitoring** – Assessment of monitoring sites at GWRCs major dams.

Project Programme

This project is being delivered in 4 key stages as displayed above.

- **Performance Standards** – Draft received – review and acceptance required. **Feb 2024**
- **Site Audits** – Western side complete, Eastern side and mapping to Performance standards. **March 2024**
- **Programme Development** - **March 2024 – May 2024**
- **Implementation** – **May 2024 – June 2027**

Components

The improvements programme is focusing on 5 key areas;

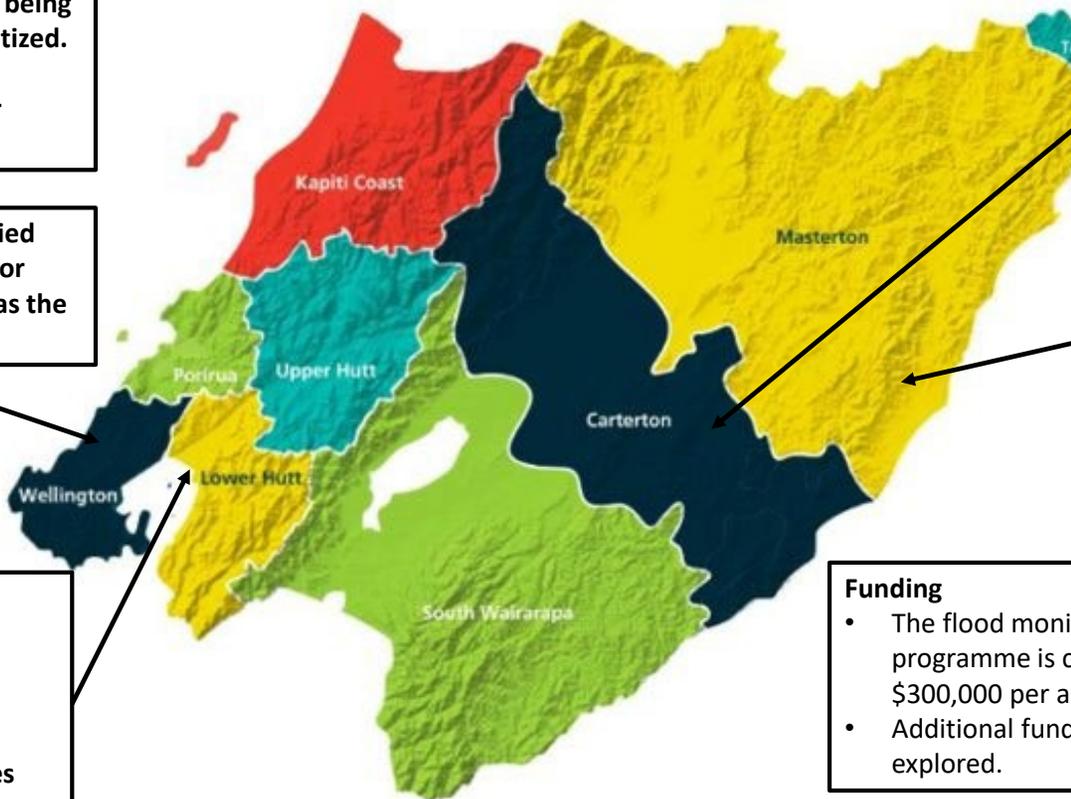
- **Infrastructure** – the resilience of the physical sites.
- **Power** – the performance standards around power connections and backup systems.
- **Communications** – the resilience of key communication links
- **Instrumentation** – the resilience of instrumentation and sensors at each site.
- **High-flow Gauging** – the ability to gauge in high flows at each site.

What are we doing about it? – Flood monitoring improvements

'Critical Sites' programme is being developed and will be prioritized. These will be the key flood monitoring site in each river catchment.

Feasibility study will be carried out into our ability to monitor smaller water courses such as the Makara Stream.

We are supporting Wellington Water & TAs in their improvements to stormwater management – but our responsibilities currently are described in the Water Courses Agreement



Wairarapa network resilience is being considered as part of the DPMC funding including satellite backups and new radio repeater sites.

Eastern Hills network improvements are proposed to be funded by DPMC as part of the funding boost.

Funding

- The flood monitoring network improvements programme is currently funded in the LTP – approx. \$300,000 per annum.
- Additional funding via the DPMC bid is being explored.

Environment Committee
27 February 2024
Report 24.68



For Information

FARMING REFERENCE GROUP CHAIR UPDATE REPORT

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee on the items discussed at the Farming Reference Group meeting held on 12 February 2024.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The Terms of Reference for the Environment Committee and the Farming Reference Group state that a written report will be provided to the Environment Committee after each Farming Reference Group meeting. The Chair of the Farming Reference Group is a member of the Environment Committee and will speak to the written report at each meeting.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachment

| Number | Title |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Farming Reference Group Chair's Report |

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatories

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Writer | Barbie Barton, Chair, Farming Reference Group |
| Approvers | Jack Mace – Director Delivery, Environment Group Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|--|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Environment Committee's terms of reference state that they will review, after each Farming Reference Group meeting, a written report of the business conducted at that meeting. |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> The Farming sector is a key demographic within the Greater Wellington Region with a focus on environmental matters. |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> There was no internal consultation. |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> There are no known risks and impacts related to this report. |

Attachment 1 to Report 24.68

Greater Wellington Farming Reference Group Report

February 2024 following a meeting on 12 February 2024

To the Greater Wellington Environment Committee

I am writing this report on behalf of the Greater Wellington Farming Reference Group (FRG).

It has been such a relief to have a real summer and allow a lot of on farm infrastructure maintenance to happen - two very wet years have delayed this making some farm tracks dangerous or inaccessible. To date the east coast is experiencing a true Wairarapa summer with dry conditions, alleviated if lucky by the odd thunderstorm. The West Coast whilst dry is about normal for this time of year but has been battling a few winds that are adding to the firewood supply.

River work in the Whareama has started post cyclone but the task ahead is huge. Those affected by the cyclone are still facing a big task to get their land back to being well fenced, well tracked and pasture renewal.

We had a presentation on the need for better and or more extensive data monitoring within the region either looking at existing projects or helping with the direction of future projects. Sharing of data with other agencies needs to be well considered so that there is not a duplication. The need for good data from riparian planting survival to water quality will definitely help the direction of resources for the region. Well-resourced Catchment Communities could be a very vital link in some of this process.

Tash Styles presented a very comprehensive review of the GWRC response to Cyclone Gabrielle both during the event and the post event recovery and future mitigation. It is very good to see the ongoing discussion and actions from these meetings involving some proactive outcomes. One of the challenges that still exists is how to keep a good communication flow during and post the event with the affected people when both electricity and connectivity are compromised.

Our farming community are going to have to adjust to the changed service from our Land Mangers as they take on more clients to fit the requirements of the new fresh water plans where they will help with some technical information for the landowner but will not have the resources to write the plans as has happened in the past. An adjustment for us all.

We discussed the impact of the change in government on the rural sector and highlighted that the Resource Management Act (RMA) replacements are gone, and we are back to the original RMA. The introduction of fast track consents for large projects should see water storage back on the agenda for either on farm project or a larger community project. A feeling that there will be good support for community based projects to help mitigate water degradation and to be the manpower behind predator control initiatives.

The extension of the East Coast Whaitua to 2027 has been greeted favourably. The FRG members reacted positively to the proposal to combine the Ruamahanga Whaitua and the

Attachment 1 to Report 24.68

East Coast Whaitua in the interest of efficiency around GW staff and any submitters. Consideration needing to be given as to what format will be used for the East Coast Whaitua with a request to wait to see the success or not of the Kapiti Whaitua Treaty House model.

I had been approached to see if there was an option to make the FRG meetings open to the public but after taking advice from Democratic Services the members have decided to follow the terms of reference and maintain the beneficial informality of the current meeting structure that allows for good meaningful discussion.

Our primary sector is in for a difficult financial period with the sheep and beef incomes expected to be well down on the last few years. This will see this sector close their chequebooks and the flow on effect to the rural service industry will be brutal - limited fertiliser, no gorse spraying minimal purchasing from the farm supply retailers.

Thank you also to the Greater Wellington staff that willingly give their time to make the FRG function and be part of supporting this valuable advisory role.

Thank you
Barbie Barton
Chair, GWRC Farmer Reference Group
RogBar@xtra.co.nz
0274 418 187

Environment Committee
27 February 2024
Report 24.85



For Information

TE RŌPŪ TAI AO – KEY UPDATES FOR QUARTER TWO

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee (the Committee) about the key updates on the completion of Te Rōpū Taiao | the Environment Group's (the Group) review processes.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The Group has completed our quarterly review (October-December 2023), which also coincides with the first six months of the Group's new structure.
3. The Group would like to share the key updates of this review with the Committee. It is the intent for this style of update to be a regular feature on the Committee agenda. The information will cover updates:
 - a relating to the new operating model and our transformation.
 - b from Directors, focusing on celebrations, challenges, and reflections on what is different because of the new operating model.
4. Please see **Attachment 1** for the presentation on the key updates for Quarter two.

Ngā Take e hāngai ana te iwi Māori

Implications for Māori

5. A key focus area for the Group is considering and integrating Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Whāriki and Mauri Tūhono approaches in our mahi, processes and systems.

**Ngā āpitihanga
Attachment**

| Number | Title |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Te Rōpū Taiao – Key updates for Quarter two |

**Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatories**

| | |
|----------|--|
| Writer | Sal Smutek - Mātanga Tohutohu Taiao Chief Advisor, Office of the Group Manager |
| Approver | Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|--|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Environment Committee has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation and review of Council's environmental strategies, policies, plans, programmes, initiatives and indicators to improve environmental outcomes for the Wellington Region's land, water, air, biodiversity, natural resources, parks and reserves, and coastal marine area. |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> Development and implementation of related work programmes fall under the core activities of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> Internal consultation was limited to officers of Greater Wellington's Environment Group. |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> This report covers the breadth of the Group's work programmes, and the associated range of environmental, reputational, legal, financial and health, safety and wellbeing risks and implications. |

Te Rōpū Taiao Key updates – Quarter Two

27 February 2024



Purpose and overview



Provide key progress update on the implementation of our new operating model since He Tīmatanga Hou



QTR 2 update - great stories to highlight, any challenges to mention, things being noticed as a result of the new structure

Rōpū Taiao Environment Group Transformation

Aspiration

Implementing the Environment Group transformation will help it achieve better long-term outcomes for land, air, water and people and build a more resilient region. The Group will be able to work in a holistic and integrated way and be informed by mātauranga Māori and other knowledge systems. The Group will work in genuine partnership with mana whenua and engage with communities, industries and stakeholders.

The shifts we'll make over the next five years to bring to life our operating model

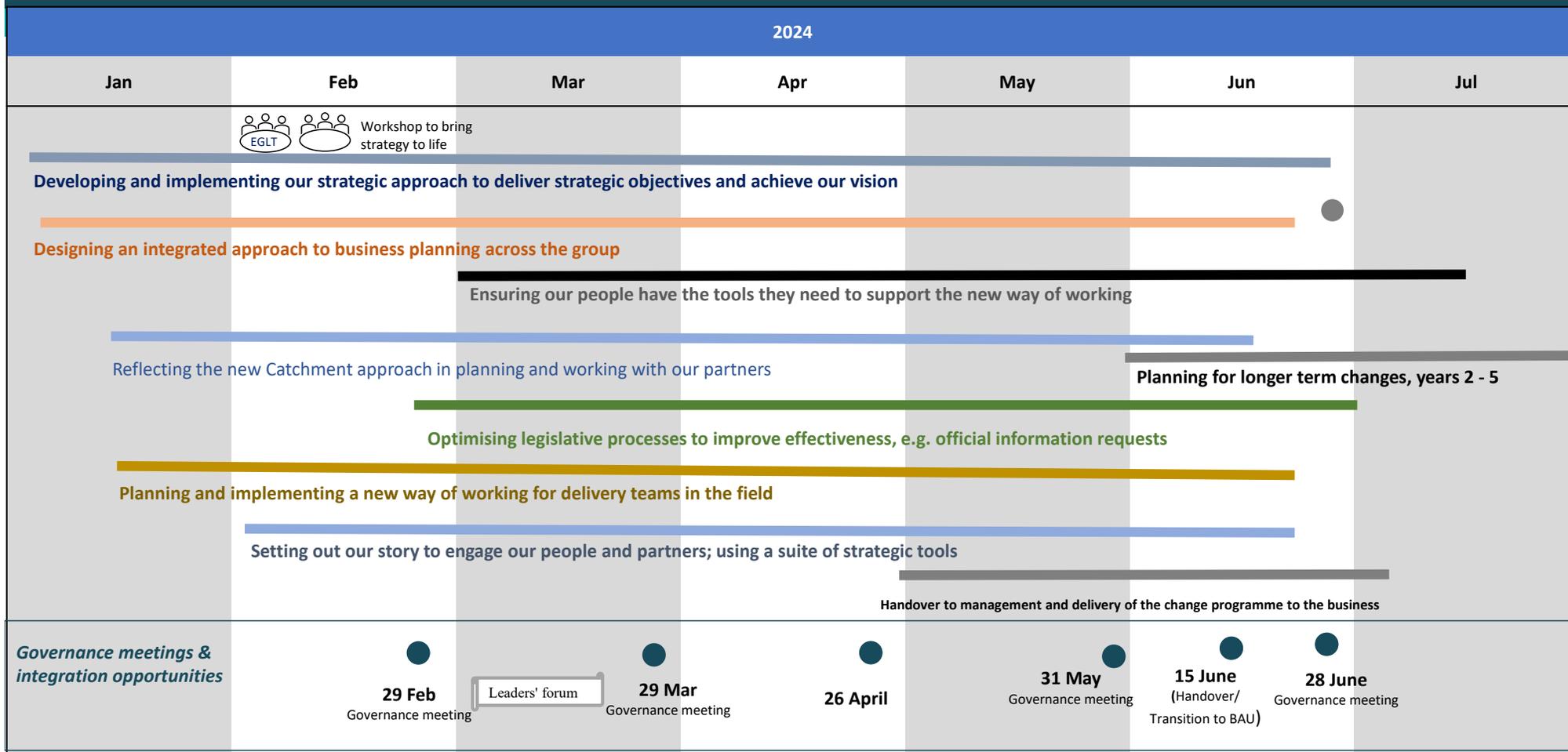
| Integration | Genuine partnership | Tactical engagement | Strategic direction | Informed choices | Knowledge base |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Greater integration within the Group and across Greater Wellington to build credibility, cohesion and alignment of effort to strategic priorities | Work in partnership with mana whenua in a genuine and coordinated way | Engage with communities and influence stakeholders to enable protection and appropriate use of the environment and build resilience | A clear, long-term strategic direction that is holistic and around which we unite | Enable EGLT and ELT to make better-informed and transparent choices that align to strategic priorities | An inclusive, accessible, compatible knowledge base to create insights to inform what we do |

We're developing the systems, processes, tools, culture and capabilities to support these shifts.

Focus for delivery in Year 1, by June 2024

|  Governance and performance |  Mana whenua partnership |  Integrated 'Strategy to delivery' system |  Culture and capabilities |  Roles and responsibilities |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Design and build tools, processes and systems to support governance, reporting and monitoring of Group performance</i> | <i>Work with Te Hunga Whiriwhiri to develop the approach for how Greater Wellington will work with mana whenua in our work programmes</i> | <i>Design and build holistic and integrated approaches to planning, reporting, evaluation, and knowledge and insights</i> | <i>Scope and plan initiatives to ensure the right capability, capacity and training to enable us to work in the context of mātauranga Māori and in partnership with Mana Whenua</i> | <i>Review and refine our operating model to ensure we have clarity of services, roles and responsibilities</i> |

Transformation Roadmap Year 1 : our priorities to 30 June 24



Key updates from Directors

Strategy, Policy and Regulation - update

- Plan change 1 to the NRP was notified at the end of October
- RPS hearing stream five was completed for freshwater
- GWRC hearing for the southern landfill consent variation was completed in December (smooth process)
- After many community complaints and working with WWL and Veolia, GW Regulation decided to take enforcement action by issuing infringement notices and fines to WWL, Veolia, HCC and UHCC in December.
- The Strategy team led an environment group-wide process to ensure the draft LTP investment for EG will help us shift towards achieving a flourishing te taiao



Knowledge and Insights - update

- Dissolved oxygen (DO) monitoring campaign on Kapiti Coast - co designed with Mana Whenua
- K&I input into Kapiti Whaitua - a good example of the new structure in operation.
- Flood Warning Project - Regional Flood Forecasting Models
- Early flood warning systems upgrade - DPMC confirmed funding of \$.125m



Baring Head

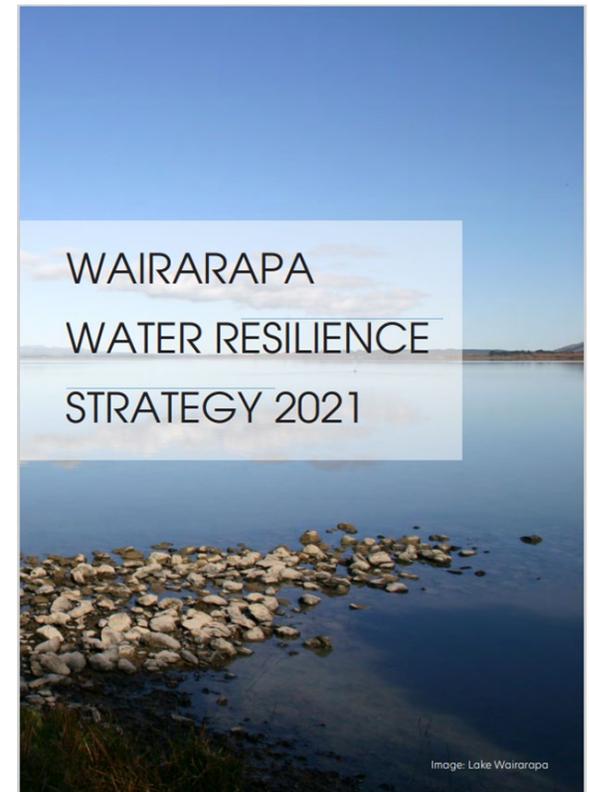
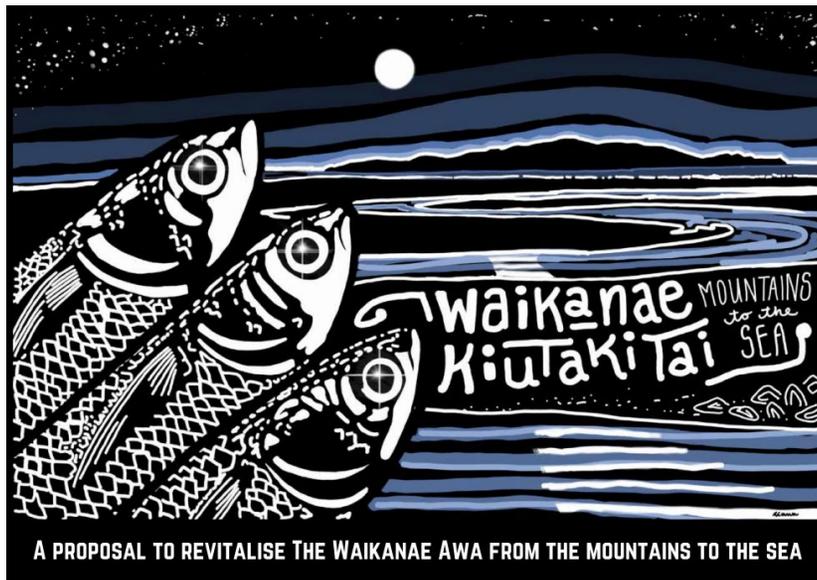
Knowledge and Insights - update

- Knowledge Strategy, Evaluation Framework and Monitoring review going well - continuing to set us up for the future
- Baring Head Lizard Monitoring - numbers doubled since 2017-2019 monitoring cycle
- Constantly improving focus on Health, Safety and Wellbeing



Catchment - update

- Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy work with council mayors and CEOs
- Waikanae Ki Uta Ki Tai with Te Atiawa, KCDC and DOC



Catchment – update

- Porirua Harbour Accord with Ngati Toa and PCC
- Kāpiti Whaitua – NPS-FM development and modelling and new way



Delivery - update



11

Matthew's Lagoon, Wairarapa Moana

- Predator Free Wellington: effective eradication on Te Motu Kairangi and launch of stage 2.
- Daleton nursery project commenced
- Evidence of a growing population of bitterns at Wairarapa Moana



*The matuku-hūrepo - Australasian bittern
Credit: Fran Bell*

Delivery – update

- Retirement of private grazing at Queen Elizabeth Park.
- Second version of Skipper’s cockpit guide (and no major collisions or disasters...)
- Baring Head accommodation opened on 14 December.
- AsMP 22/23 completed and received.
- Parks fire management regime in place in time for fire season
- Crack willow and debris removal Crown funded and started
- Fish passage work kicking into gear



Baring Head accommodation

Environment Committee
27 February 2023
Report 24.30



For Information

TE RŌPŪ TAI AO | ENVIRONMENT GROUP UPDATE

Te take mō te pūrongo
Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee (the Committee) on:
 - a The strategic direction and priorities of the Environment Group
 - b The work underway, across the region and within each Catchment

Te horopaki
Context

Regional Overview

Flood Warning Project - Regional Flood Forecasting Models

2. A pilot flood forecasting platform has been built to establish a flood warning system for those parts of the Region where people and property are at risk from flooding. This includes a forecast model for the Hutt River catchment that is linked to real-time river flow and rainfall data collected by Greater Wellington and forecasted rainfall data supplied by MetService.
3. The work this financial year will see the Hutt River model fully calibrated and operational, and forecast models developed for all flood scheme rivers managed by Greater Wellington across the Region.

Flood Protection Infrastructure - Annual Condition Assessments

4. Annual condition assessments for flood protection and erosion control assets have recently been completed. This programme involved over 1,000 hours of recorded time across the Region to inspect 7,200 assets and identify 540 defects. Understanding the current state of our assets enables data-driven decisions to reduce the probability of asset failure and the identification of opportunities to integrate nature-based solutions. An example of this is identifying areas where bioengineering and vegetation could enhance asset stability and ecosystem health. This year we have leveraged drone technology and aerial surveys, not only to enhance efficiencies and scope of our assessments, but also to reduce the distance travelled in fleet vehicles.

Communities

Inviting community groups to present their work to Environment Committee

5. Mountains to the Sea Wellington will be presenting on their mahi at the meeting on 27 February 2024 during public participation. This is part of an ongoing initiative requested

by councillors. The Community, Capability and Change Team will be engaging with community group and coordinating the items for future Environment Committee meetings.

Community support for local nurseries

6. Greater Wellington is increasing its support for community and mana whenua nurseries through workshops, provision of advice and grant support. Akura Plant Nursery, owned and operated by Greater Wellington, is increasing its percentage of plants bought from local nurseries. Wainuioru School and Community Nursery, Piwakawaka Plants and Norfolk Road Nursery are supplying plants this season. Pae tū Mōkai o Taurira (He Kotare nursery) and Kohunui marae nursery are also supplying plants directly to Greater Wellington planting programmes. Greater Wellington hosted an 'eco-sourcing seed' training workshop in spring 2023, attended by iwi representatives and all of the local nurseries who are providing plant materials for Greater Wellington programmes. The programme will continue with another workshop scheduled in autumn. Additional support has been provided to nurseries through community grants, the provision of advice, and connections with local expertise.

Fire preparedness across the parks network

7. The removal of grazing livestock from parks can result in an elevated fire risk in locations across our parks network. Parks staff have commissioned external expertise to prepare wildfire risk analysis plans for Baring head, Queen Elizabeth Park/Whareroa and West Belmont Parks. This risk analysis work involves park weather conditions, fire ignition risk factors and vegetation cover. Fire behaviour modelling is produced to show how fires would behave in our parks.
8. Fire risk management plans for these parks identify a number of actions to reduce the risk of fires in our parks. Some of these actions are physical such as fire breaks, fire ponds, or vegetation management, and some actions are administrative, for example public education, recreation/access activity controls, staff training, improving connections with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and installation of fire weather stations across the parks network. Parks has implemented many of these actions already. The majority of remaining actions are required in areas that have not yet had grazing removed but will in future years.
9. Proactive risk reduction actions have already proved a success with a fire at Baring Head (East Harbour Regional Park) in September 2023 that was ignited by a downed power line near the cottages and light house. The fire had very minimal spread as a result of proactive removal of vegetation and tree crown lifting before the fire.
10. Our activity control plans, which address ignition risks, cover activities undertaken by Greater Wellington staff, contractors, and stakeholders. They also include recreational activities including general park access restrictions if a park is determined to be at "extreme" fire risk level, based on particular risk assessment criteria and methods. Both activity controls and general park access restrictions have been implemented this summer.

Jobs for nature – kaimahi projects across the Region

11. The catchment team is working with delivery, Te Hunga Whiriwhiri and our mana whenua partners to identify future partnering opportunities for these kaimahi teams. Other regional partners like Department of Conservation (DoC), Wellington City Council (WCC), Hutt City Council (HCC), Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) and Zealandia have also been involved in some of this korero to date.

Current fast track consent applications across the Region

12. There are currently seven fast track applications that have been lodged under the Covid 19 Recovery Act 2020 and are in progress with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). Further detail on the applications can be found on the EPA’s website.¹ These projects are all at a relatively early stage in the process. Apart from Waikanae North, the projects are not yet at the point where we have been formally requested for comment by an expert Consenting panel. We will be providing input on these applications when and if it is formally requested. Pre and post application advice has been provided on some of the projects where applicants have specifically sought this.

| Project Name | Description | Current status as reported on EPA website |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Moy Estate, Otaki | Residential development | Lodged and in progress |
| Waikanae North | Residential development | Lodged and in progress, comments invited on application by EPA |
| Harmony Energy Solar Farm, Carterton | Solar farm | Lodged and in progress |
| Plimmerton Farm Stage 1 | Residential development | Lodged and in progress. We’ve been invited to nominate to the Expert Consenting Panel |
| Ōtaki Māori Race Course development | Residential development | Lodged and in progress |
| Jamaica Rise development, Grenada North | Residential development | Lodged and in progress |
| Metlifecare retirement village, Karori | Retirement village | Lodged and in progress |

Regional policy Statement Change 1

13. The first change to the Regional Policy Statement (RPS Change 1) continues through the hearings process. The hearing streams for Overarching matters; Integrated Management; Climate Change; Urban Development and Freshwater have now been completed. Hearing stream 6 (Indigenous Ecosystems) starts on 20 February 2024.
14. Variation 1, which will bring Te Mana o Te Wai/Freshwater visions into the process has been notified and the submission period has closed. 7 Submissions and 3 Further Submissions were received.

¹ <https://www.epa.govt.nz/fast-track-consenting/fast-track-projects/>

15. There is a strong focus on identifying, promoting and supporting nature-based solutions. This was covered in the Climate Change hearing stream and links closely with the Indigenous Ecosystems provisions under consideration in Hearing Stream 6. The need to safeguard our environment and prevent deterioration is a consistent theme throughout, and working with our mana whenua partners and community forms a significant part of the non-regulatory methods.

Catchment Overview

Te Whanganui-a-Tara

16. Baring Head supports one of our most important lizard populations on the mainland, including the regionally 'at risk' copper and northern spotted skinks. Monitoring this summer has shown that the lizard populations are doing better than ever as a result of the pest control effort at the site. Baring Head is part of the Key Native Ecosystem Programme, that has mobilised the Pest Animals team to control pest predators at the site. Knowledge and Insights has been working with the Friends of Baring Head community group to monitor the outputs of this pest control and groups of volunteers and staff from across the council, guided by lizard experts, to monitor the lizard population health since 2012. In the beginning hedgehogs tracked consistently up around 80 percent but since the Pest Animals team enhanced their trapping network, hedgehog numbers have been in steady decline. Dedicated lizard monitoring is conducted in three-year cycles and this year, at the start of the next monitoring cycle, the lizard numbers are approximately double what they were between 2017-2019. We put this down to the success in reducing the predation pressure on these species of conservation concern, particularly of hedgehogs. This is notable as lizard populations on the mainland are notoriously hard to protect with pest control.
17. The bluegill bully is a small, endemic, freshwater fish (Figure 1). Its populations are classified as 'declining' throughout New Zealand. The Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi is considered a regional stronghold for bluegill bully, so an assessment to better understand their hydraulic habitat (Figure 2) and timing of spawning in the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi was required through resource consent conditions. During this recent study, instream works carried out to mitigate erosion along the banks of the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi were observed to have a significant detrimental impact on the quality of riffle habitat and were therefore expected to have impacted on bluegill bully spawning. We are working across te Rōpū Taiao/the Environment Group to use this improved understanding of bluegill bully spawning habitat requirements and timing, to influence best practice instream works to better enable protection of key habitat for this endemic species.



Figure 1: Bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*) photographed in the Hutt River /Te Awa Kairangi



Figure 2: Bluegill bully nest (eggs) located beneath a large cobble in riffle-habitat in the Hutt River. After the eggs are laid and fertilised, the male bluegill bully guards the eggs until they hatch and the larval (baby) bullies are washed downstream into the sea. After several months at sea, juvenile bluegill bully return to the region's rivers and streams to complete their growth into adults.

18. The resource consent hearing for the Southern Landfill Expansion Piggyback Option (SLEPO) was held the week beginning 11 December 2023 at WCC offices and heard by an Independent Hearing Panel. Key issues in contention were the effects from windblown litter and the inclusion of trigger levels in the proposed condition set. Subsequent expert conferencing has taking place between the planning and air quality experts. The decision is expected to be issued mid-March 2023.

Seaview

19. Greater Wellington took action against Wellington Water Limited, Veolia New Zealand Limited, Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) and HCC for discharging offensive and objectionable odour beyond the boundary of the Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant. Thirteen incidents of offensive and objectionable odour beyond the boundary of the property were confirmed by Greater Wellington Compliance Officers from 31 October until 20 December 2023, along with significant levels of public complaint over the smell.
20. As a consequence, infringement notices were issued to both Wellington Water Limited and Veolia New Zealand Limited covering 13 confirmed discharges and 13 abatement notice breaches, totalling 26 instances of non-compliance with a cost per company of \$22,750. Infringement notices for breaches of abatement notices were also issued to both HCC and UHCC, who are the consent holders responsible for compliance and investment in the treatment plant – with a cost per council of \$9,750.
21. We are working with an oil company and Maritime NZ around changes to their spill planning and prevention plan ahead of the introduction of a persistent fuel oil at Seaview sometime this year. Until now only petrol and diesel and small quantities of specialised cargoes were discharged at Seaview. Petrol and diesel are non-persistent fuels which means they break up very rapidly on their own. The proposed fuel oil would linger longer if spilt, this requires a higher level of response capability by the company overseeing the discharge.

Natural Resources Plan Change 1

22. Natural Resources Plan (NRP) change 1 implements the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) and solidifies the regulatory recommendations from the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Programme in a planning instrument, resulting in significant changes to the operative NRP. It has now been notified and the submission period has closed.
23. Over 270 submissions were received. Raw submissions can be found under the “Submissions” section of our NRP Page.² A summary of [decisions requested by submitter](#) and [decisions requested by provision](#) can be found on our website too. These are the summarised versions of individual submission. Full submission can be found under the Submissions section of the website.
24. Webinars and in-person meetings were held with key stakeholders during the submissions period to engage and communicate the detail of the NRP Plan Change 1. These engagements gathered a lot of interest and generated good discussion, though also highlighted the strength of opinion held by some towards NRP Plan Change 1. This is reflected in the large number of submissions received.
25. Further submissions for NRP Plan Change 1 are out now and close on 8 March 2024. Submitters have 20 working days to get their submissions in.
26. *Pest animals* – Planning is underway with Wellington City Council (WCC) to undertake some rabbit control along the Skyline walkway. Te Kopahou trapping work has begun in conjunction with WCC and as part of the Regional Predator Control Programme, where we are working with WCC to utilise and test the effectiveness of AT220 traps.

Predator Free Wellington

27. The Predator Free Wellington project is pushing well into the territory of its second Phase – CBD to Owhiro Bay. This area is densely populated by predators and will require substantial effort to achieve predator-free status. 240 hectares are now under active eradication activities, with 55 hectares of devices installed and approximately 80 hectares of this area clear of predators (rats, possums and mustelids). Incursion management of the already-eradicated areas (1077 hectares, including phase 1 in Miramar) is proving effective, supported by community members reporting any suspicions of predator activity. A recent stoat incursion was responded to by the Predator Free Wellington team and local community members. A Department of Conservation detection dog team was also brought to investigate.
28. There is a YouTube clip that talks about the impact of predators on our native bird populations and the impact of the Predator Free programme to-date. This can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfmmWUIFGH4&t=3s>

² <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/plans-policies-and-bylaws/updating-our-regional-policy-statement-and-natural-resources-plan/natural-resources-plan-2023-changes/plan-change-1-to-the-natural-resources-plan-submissions/>

Te Awa Kairangi

29. Currently, the major focus area for flood resilience within Te Awa Kairangi is Riverlink – the length of river between Kennedy Good Bridge and Ewen Bridge near to Lower Hutt Central Business District.
30. The remaining projects in the floodplain management plan are currently being reviewed, prioritised and scoped. Further details on what projects are planned for the next financial year will be confirmed closer to the time.
31. The climate resilience programme of works was completed by 30 June 2023. The remaining work required is handover documentation and financial close out for a small number of projects. We have two projects that are still within their one year defects period – Site 1 Stokes Valley and Site 13 Poets Park.
32. The rock structures maintenance programme is scheduled to be undertaken between February and May 2024. This maintenance work will involve machinery working within the river channel at times and will create sediment release.
33. To minimise the environmental effects this work is being undertaken under an approved Site-Specific Effects Monitoring Plan (SSEMP) as per the River Maintenance Resource Consent.
34. Communication with affected parties has been completed and a comms plan developed to keep the community informed.

Pest animals

35. The Wallaby dog gave the ‘all clear’ at the wallaby eradication site in Kaitoke. We are one more clear check away from declaring the population eradicated. Aerial ungulate control has begun in the water catchments, regional parks and forests, to complement the ongoing ground control. This aerial control work covers the remote alpine tops of these catchments and any slips and gorges, covering approximately 20% of these large areas. The work will be undertaken until the end of June 2024, pending fine weather conditions.

Ensuring forestry good management practice within Greater Wellington owned commercial forests

36. Parks staff continue to encourage good environmental practices across the Greater Wellington owned forestry sites and undertake quarterly checks in partnership with colleagues in Environmental Regulation. Recent work has focused on delineating wetlands in the forestry area and having plantation forestry specific fire activity controls. Parks staff have recently linked up with a programme of work being led by Environment Restoration aiming to improve forestry management practice in the Porirua catchment. This will align efforts to maximise environmental performance of forestry operations on parks land. Expanding and maintaining recreational access throughout the parks forests where forest management activities are active continues to be challenging as the values of recreational access are balanced with site safety needs.

Te Awarua-o-Porirua

37. The team have undertaken camera monitoring and a ground survey to investigate a potential Wallaby sighting in Judgeford. No sighting has been confirmed and the site has been closed down pending further information.
38. Pest control infrastructure at Whitireia Park will be assessed for fire damage.
39. Greater Wellington is continuing to work with our legal team and the relevant parties on an Enforcement Order to ensure compliance with conditions of consents. Previously, we dismissed charges primarily relating to a number of sediment discharges from open earthworks across the Transmission Gully project based on legal advice that we could achieve a better result for the environment by pursuing an Enforcement Order rather than trying to prosecute.

Wellington City Council district plan Hearing - Greenfield development areas

40. Greater Wellington Officers will attend the WCC District Plan hearing on the Greenfield development areas and have submitted a hearing statement. In response to a submission from Kainga Ora, WCC recommend that Upper Stebbings/Glenside west and Lincolnshire Farms are immediately live-zoned as medium density residential, industrial or open space, resulting in the likely acceleration of development on these sites. The areas are within the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua.
41. Officers have expressed a neutral stance on the recommended changes: supportive of the master planning approach taken but questioning of the need for greenfield development when further intensification capacity could be enabled.
42. Officers will emphasise our key concerns, notably the need to align with the RPS and with NRP plan changes; the need for development to integrate with transport planning and support mode shift; and the use of best practice storm water and earthworks management to mitigate adverse downstream effects on the Seton Nossiter and Stebbings flood detention dams, Porirua stream and Te Awarua-O-Porirua

Porirua City Council District Plan notification

43. The decisions version of the Porirua City Council (PCC) District Plan was notified in December 2023. Greater Wellington officers have decided against appealing, though are reserving the option of becoming party to another appellant.
44. Our 2020 submission on the plan was broadly supportive. There are some concerns regarding the Intensification Planning Instrument, though this is not within scope for appeals. The Porirua City Council District Plan will need to give effect to NRP and RPS changes in due course, having been originally notified prior to either of those.

Improving Forestry Good Management Practice

45. Land used for forestry makes up 10% of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua catchment area. Of this, 50% of the forests (across 89 properties, 1,096 hectares) are likely to be harvested in the next five years. The trees are over 23 years old (See Figures 3 and 4 below). Harvesting activities pose a significant environmental risk, particularly to sediment sensitive waterbodies such as Porirua Harbour.
46. In August 2023, Greater Wellington began a pilot project to engage with the forestry sector in the Porirua Whaitua. Greater Wellington has limited forestry expertise, and

outside of Greater Wellington owned land, primarily holds a regulatory relationship with foresters. The intent of this project is to establish a reputable presence with forestry operators in the catchment, and through building these relationships, influence behaviour change. The project is inspired by similar projects in other regions such as Northland and Tasman, where foresters expressed that being supported to improve practice is more effective than regulation alone.

47. There are two primary drivers for this project:
 - a Maintaining compliance with the National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF) and,
 - b Fulfilling two recommendations in the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Implementation Programme:
 - i **Recommendation 54:** Greater Wellington works with the forestry sector to identify potential barriers and risks to good practice in reducing sediment from forestry operations and works with the industry to overcome the risks and barriers.
 - ii **Recommendation 56:** Greater Wellington provides sufficient resources to deliver consistent advice on forestry good practice and compliance, both within the Whaitua and across the region.
48. We have engaged external resources to undertake a range of activities including:
 - a Producing a catchment overview report (completed).
 - b Establishing a stakeholder engagement plan (in development).
 - c Providing expert advisory services (underway, starting with Battle Hill Forest).
 - d Facilitating workshops and site visits with forestry operators.
 - e Liaising between forestry operators and Greater Wellington regulation.
 - f Reporting, including identifying barriers and opportunities to improving forestry practices.
49. It is anticipated that this project will demonstrate that a supportive, relationship-approach to supporting forestry good practice will improve regulatory compliance as well as good practice performance. This approach is likely to be extended to other Whaitua where forestry is a prevalent land use or sediment reduction is a priority.

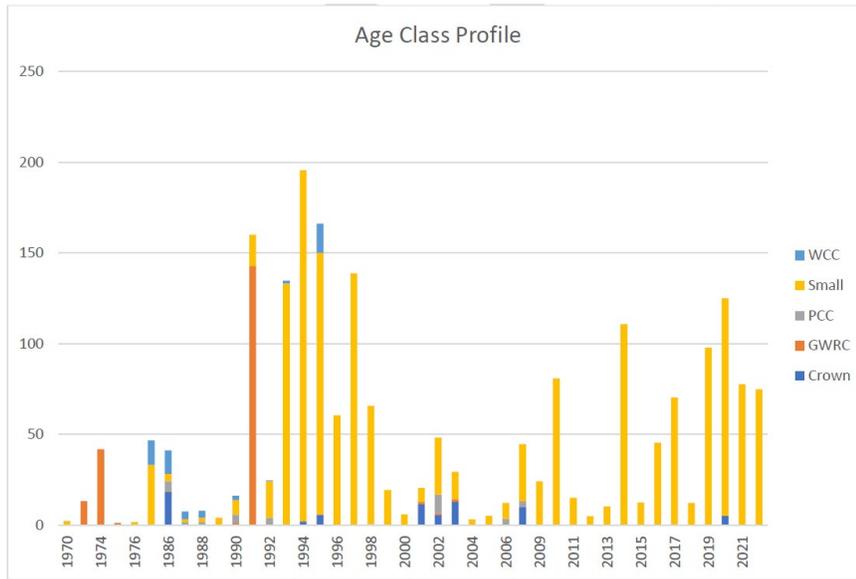


Figure 3. Forests planted by year and landowner type in the Porirua Catchment (hectare). Forests due to be harvested in the next five years were planted between 1984 and 2000.

| Landowner type | Forested area (hectares) | % of forested area | Number of landowners |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Councils (Greater Wellington, WCC, PCC) | 217 | 20 | 3 |
| Crown | 27.3 | 2 | 1 |
| Other small owners | 852 | 78 | 85 |
| Total | 1,096 | 100 | 89 |

Figure 4. Landowner type and area coverage (hectares) for forests in the Porirua Catchment due to be harvested in the next 5 years.

Community collaboration

Te Whakaritenga – the Porirua Harbour Accord

50. The partners continue to meet fortnightly to progress this important mahi. Ngāti Toa are currently working on a mauri ora framework to share with the project team that will provide the monitoring framework for the Accord. The draft accord documents are yet to be presented to the various Executive Leadership Teams and the sequencing for that will be Ngāti Toa first.

Community Environment Fund update

51. This year Greater Wellington was able to fund all of the 12 Te Awarua o Porirua Community Environment Fund applicants that met the funding criteria. This included a number of groups that we have been supporting for a while that needed more funding to continue their great work as well as some exciting new projects. New applicants included two schools who are carrying out wetland restoration projects on their school grounds, and others focused on large- and small-scale planting projects, pest animal and/or pest plant control. Through this fund we are also supporting school students from primary and secondary schools and early childhood centres in Tawa to restore an

area behind Battle Hill Forest Farm Park and learn why this work is so important to their local environment. In total, Greater Wellington are currently supporting 24 different community run environmental restoration projects around this whaitua through this fund which we co-manage with our mana whenua partners Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira.

Fires in Regional Parks

Whitireia Park fire, January 2024

52. The January fire which began on 11 January 2024 burned around 17 hectares of the park. The likely cause was an arc from the power lines however this is unconfirmed. The fire was under control within 24 hours, while flare ups continued for a further 48 hours. Delivery staff were involved, assisting FENZ with the fire as well as keeping the public out of the area. The park was handed back to Greater Wellington from FENZ control after 72 hours. Greater Wellington is working with Ngāti Toa to plan restoration activities and will draw on learnings from restoration efforts after a park fire in 2010 which damaged a similar area of the park.
53. As noted above, staff have already begun a programme of work to reduce fire risk in parks. Having improved the width and vegetation margins of firebreaks at Whitireia Park prior to the fire occurring assisted control efforts and enabled firefighters to prevent the fire spreading to the other half of the park.



Figure 5: Whitireia Park after 12 January fire.

Belmont Park fire, 12 February 2024

54. On Monday, 12 February 2024 at approximately 2.30pm a fire broke out in vegetation behind Porirua College, in Cannons Creek. The north-westerly wind pushed the fire towards the western part of Belmont Regional Park which includes the Māra Roa and Waihora Loop walking tracks. The fire burned through pine slash and native vegetation, eventually reaching the park boundary, and moving into the park. Before the fire spread into the park, Greater Wellington park rangers ensured public safety by clearing the tracks of park users and closing the park access in the western area. Around 48

firefighters and 17 appliances, with assistance from two helicopters and heavy machinery, attended the fire, bringing it under control that evening.

55. FENZ crews remained on site overnight and continued to extinguish and monitor hotspots on Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 February 2024. At the time of drafting this report FENZ had not yet declared the fire extinguished but were expected to do so before Friday, 16 February 2024 and hand park management over to Greater Wellington.
56. Early assessments show limited damage, with an estimated seven hectares of vegetation burnt. The fire reached Māra Roa track but there was no damage to infrastructure. This is due a quick response from FENZ and the use of helicopter monsoon buckets.



Figure 6: Western Belmont Regional Park, 12 February 2024



Figure 7: Fire control response, Belmont Regional Park, 12 February 2024



Figure 8: Fire control response, Belmont Regional Park, 12 February 2024



Figure 9: Fire control response, Belmont Regional Park, 12 February 2024

Wairarapa Coast

Pest animals

57. A cost estimate/control plan to extend the Opuawe coastal section of the Opuawe Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) predator traps west, through to Ngapotiki, was prepared. Discussions are currently being had with the landowner. A pair of breeding NZ Dotterel were seen in December 2023 near White Rock and again in January with two chicks.
58. As part of the Regional Predator Control Programme, planning is underway to contract out possum control in two areas. These contracts are planned from March 2024 and include the following operational areas:
 - a Castlepoint - 7,210 hectares
 - b Stronvar - 13,679 hectares

59. Performance targets are orientated around the reduction in possum population and biodiversity benefits.

Ruamāhanga

60. The Daleton satellite poplar and willow nursery will be developed to provide soil conservation trees for the Region utilising the treated effluent from Carterton's municipal wastewater plant. It has progressed with negotiations with a preferred irrigation supplier currently underway. This irrigation system will be designed to allow for the application of treated effluent over a tree crop, allowing for both wind speed and soil moisture levels to ensure it complies with the resource consent conditions issued to Carterton District Council. Soil probes and wind meters will dictate when application can occur automatically. A tender for a 4m high artificial shelterbelt system (similar to kiwifruit orchards) is about to commence. Both of these activities are being scheduled to be completed before winter 2024. With the balance of facilities, roads, tracks, services, fencing, and planting to be undertaken this coming spring/summer 2024 period.
61. Water resilience work covering both Wairarapa coast and the Ruamāhanga is being delivered through the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy (2021). An interim governance group comprising all four councils and mana whenua has convened to oversee work programme development and support integration. delivering resilience will require strong contributions across water efficiency, allocations, natural attenuation and storage (as per the strategy).

Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga Floodplain Management Plan (2019)

62. Stage two of the River Road, Masterton erosion protection work has taken longer to get underway due to continued erosion at the end of the Waipoua river as it meets the Ruamāhanga River. The erosion has meant a re-design of the proposed 150m rock revetment to prevent the Waipoua river outflanking the rock revetment. The re-design was discussed with both Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Kahangunu ki Wairarapa to ensure our commitment to co-design continued. Both iwi were in agreement with the changes to the revetment and wanted to ensure the work commenced as soon as possible to prevent further loss of the park at the end of River Road. The affected landowners have also been kept informed of the delays and changes to the design. We are still on track to complete this work before this winter.
63. Stage three of the River Road, Masterton, still requires discussions with both iwi.

Government Funding – Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet – Cyclone Recovery Unit

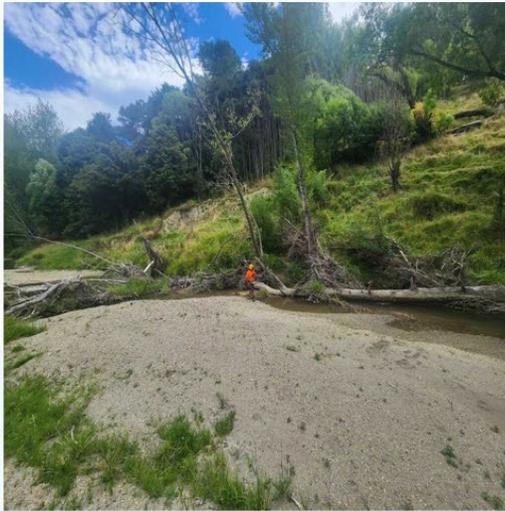
Crack Willow blockage removal – eastern Wairarapa rivers

64. As stated in the last meeting report we were successful in obtaining \$3.5 million from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) for the Recovery and Flooding Resilience fund for the crack willow blockage removal in the eastern rivers in the Wairarapa. This decision was publicly announced on 6 October 2023. Our contribution is \$250,000 worth of project management time. Crown Infrastructure Partners (CIP) are administering the funding.
65. An internal meeting was held on 16 January 2024 to introduce a steering group into the project that will provide both expertise and local knowledge to achieve successful

outcomes for the project. The introduction included an overview of the project, a discussion on procurement and health and safety and a discussion on how to eradicate the crack willow species (*Salix fragilis*).

66. The removal of crack willow blockages throughout the Eastern Rivers of the Wairarapa started early 2024 and Phase One (summer 2023/24) will focus on removing 91 blockages from the Kopuaranga and Whareama Rivers. Phase Two (summer 2024/25) will include approximately 263 blockage removals from the Eastern Rivers of the Wairarapa and the removal of crack willow from localised areas. The localised areas will focus on choking points within the river channels and the removed crack willow be replanted with natives to assist with habitat rehabilitation.
67. Below is an example of some of the work we have already completed.

Before:



After:



68. Discussions with mana whenua will commence in the first quarter of 2024 to determine the most effective methodologies for habitat rehabilitation, including identifying localised areas where the crack willow species will be removed, and habitat rehabilitation will be required. Trial sites for native species will be established with mana whenua in the coming months.
69. Discussions with community groups are underway to ensure we are aware of all major blockages and can prioritise accordingly.

Early Flood warning systems upgrade

70. In November 2023 Greater Wellington applied to DPMC again for further funding to assist in the Cyclone Gabrielle recovery. We put forward a further crack willow blockage removal application totalling \$5 million and \$4 million for improvement flood warning systems.
71. On 24 January 2024, we received confirmation from DPMC on approved funding of \$1.25 million for flood warning system upgrades. We were unsuccessful in obtaining further funding for crack willow blockage removal.

72. The next steps are to rescope the flood warning system upgrades and determine what we can achieve with the \$1.25 million fund. Then we will again be working with CIP to develop a project schedule and a contract.
73. This work is scheduled to be completed by 25 June 2025.

Waiōhine River Plan - Implementation

1. The Waiōhine River Plan Advisory Committee (WRPAC) members had their first meeting on 21 November 2023. The meeting held in Greytown had member introductions and provided the WRPAC with a background of the River Plan, capital works to be undertaken (stopbank design and construction), and Greater Wellington operations gave an overview of previous works in the Waiōhine. The WRPAC also elected its chairperson.
2. Scoping of the stopbank work continues. We are currently in the process of procuring a design consultant to complete the detailed design on both the North and Kuratawhiti stopbanks, along with a re-run of the flood modelling. The next stage is to present the final design to the directly affected landowners in a hope to obtain their affected party sign off, before we proceed to applying for consent to build.
3. We have been in discussions with the directly affected landowners and will continue to keep them up to date with our progress.

Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

74. Further stopbank repairs are ongoing in the Mahaki Road area of the Ruamāhanga River. The Capital works project to realign the stopbank has commenced, with procurement of the main contractor underway. The project team is working to get tenders, evaluation, and negotiations complete by the end of February 2024 with the contractor starting on site by early/mid-March 2024.

Wairarapa Moana Kākahi count

75. The annual Kākahi count took place at Western Lake Reserve, Lake Wairarapa on 10 February 2024. A large turnout saw the work completed quickly under sunny skies. Initial results show the continued trend of larger individuals being found, rather than juveniles. This was the 10th year and once the data is collected, scientists will have a much better idea of population trends. Further work is now happening to determine the future of this citizen science project including new sites and methods to better understand the population and how to protect it.

Pest animals

76. Greater Wellington and DOC will meet to discuss the current predator and rabbit control efforts within the Onoke Spit/Ocean Beach area, with a focus on replacing current worn out traps and possibly installing more traps along the Spit. Greater Wellington will provide advice and any cost estimates/control plans for this work.

Regional Predator Control Programme

77. Whangaehu operation is almost complete and good progress is being made through Mauriceville area.

Kāpiti

78. The Kāpiti Whaitua process with representation from mana whenua, KCDC, community and Greater Wellington continues at pace.
79. The resource consent for the Paraparaumu Town Centre development, 77-110 Kapiti Road, has been lodged. The application includes bulk peat removal, wetland loss and offset and the realignment of the Wharemauku Stream to prepare the site for large scale urban development. A concurrent application has been lodged with KCDC. Council officers are assessing the applications jointly and will align processing where practicable. The applications are currently being assessed for further information and no decision regarding notification has been made as of yet.

Pest animals

80. Greater Wellington's strategy to raise predator traps in Ōtaki to catch ferrets and not hedgehogs is proving successful, however, more evidence is needed to confirm ferrets can still access traps.
81. Several traps were deployed around the Mangaone Stream mouth to protect black-fronted dotterels that are breeding here. This is the southernmost end of a KNE, and we expect the community will ultimately take ownership of servicing these traps.
82. Rabbit control planning is underway for New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), Transpower and selected private land.
83. A ferret caught near the expressway in Waikanae has been sent for tuberculosis testing due to its lungs looking abnormal.

Monitoring programme

84. Knowledge and Insights (K&I) are working with Kāpiti iwi to co-design and co-deliver a monitoring programme to fill data gaps identified during the Kāpiti Whaitua process. The opportunity was identified late last year during a meeting in which the Committee was considering the existing water quality and ecosystem health data, baseline states and the future targets they might like to set.
85. It was identified that a significant gap exists for dissolved oxygen (DO), which requires continuous monitoring over the summer/dry months to set a baseline state. Collecting this type of data is labour-intensive and summer is already a busy time for K&I field monitoring staff. Iwi reps on the committee suggested that they could assist by providing the labour resource needed to install and maintain the loggers. Since then, we have been co-developing monitoring plans with each iwi and come up with individual plans that will fill crucial data gaps for:
 - a Setting DO baseline states in the various proposed management units,
 - b Macrophyte information that will be useful for the current Kāpiti Whaitua modelling project, and
 - c Identifying mahinga kai attributes and baseline states for those attributes (for example, tuna abundance and health).

86. K&I staff are working closely with iwi to ensure they have the necessary equipment, training and support to implement the monitoring plans in their own rohe. Field work commences this week.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachment

| Number | Title |
|--------|---|
| 1 | Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings |

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatory

| | |
|----------|---|
| Approver | Lian Butcher – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Taiao Group Manager, Environment |
|----------|---|

| He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations |
|--|
| <i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The Environment Committee has responsibility to consider all matters across the development and implementation of the work programmes of Greater Wellington's Environment Group. |
| <i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> Development and implementation of related work programmes fall under the core activities of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan. |
| <i>Internal consultation</i> Internal consultation was limited to officers of Greater Wellington's Environment Group. |
| <i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> This report covers the full breadth of work programmes, and equally a broad range of environmental, reputational, legal, financial and health, safety and wellbeing risks and associated implications. |

Attachment 1 to Report 24.30

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

| Date | Action item | Status and comment |
|------------------|---|---|
| 27 April 2023 | <p>Environment/Catchment Update – Report 23.2</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Committee requested an update on Transmission Gully and the wetlands in Queen Elizabeth Park in future reports</p> | <p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Comment: Staff provided an update on Transmission Gully for the 23 November 2023 Environment Group update.</p> <p>Greater Wellington’s public website has recently been updated with information about wetland restoration at Queen Elizabeth Park.</p> <p>https://www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park/whats-happening-in-queen-elizabeth-park/</p> |
| 12 October 2023 | <p>Pest Management Report – Report 23.467</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Committee requested that it receive an annual pest management report. The Committee requested that this report cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Overall pest management work in the Wellington Region b Community pest management work c Greater Wellington pest control work on Greater Wellington controlled land, including regional parks. | <p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Comment: Annual Pest Management Plan was presented to the Environment Committee in November 2023.</p> <p>Community pest management work will be considered and tested as part of our broader reporting programme, currently under review.</p> |
| 23 November 2023 | <p>Greater Wellington’s Management of Forestry Slash – Report 23.592 [For Information]</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Committee requested a report to a future Environment Committee meeting regarding what Greater</p> | <p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Comment: Update provided in the Te Rōpū Taiao Environment Group Update report.</p> |

Attachment 1 to Report 24.30

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| | Wellington does as good practice above the compliance levels for forestry. | |
| 23 November 2023 | <p>Regulation of Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Wellington Region – Report 23.594 [For Information]</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested a report to a future meeting regarding the history and future of urban development as it relates to wastewater.</p> | <p>Status: To be scheduled</p> <p>Comment:</p> |
| 23 November 2023 | <p>Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan for 2023-2024 – Report 23.574 [For Information]</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested the Department of Conservation document that was presented to the Farming Reference Group be circulated to the Committee.</p> | <p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Comment: Presentation from Department of Conservation circulated to Environment Committee members by Jack Mace, Director Delivery.</p> |
| 23 November 2023 | <p>Te Rōpū Taiao – Environment Group Update – Report 23.8 [For Information]</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested: A report to a future meeting regarding consents that have been met in relation to Transmission Gully.</p> | <p>Status: To be discussed</p> <p>Comment:</p> |
| | A schedule of the meetings and webinars about the Implementation of Plan Change 1 to be circulated to members. | Status: Complete |

Attachment 1 to Report 24.30

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

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| | | Comment: This was provided after the November 2023 Environment Committee |
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